1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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Purification of the land when some one is sold: When a person sells
567 a son or a brother, he may not tell the *Ten'dan*', nor will the latter take
783 any notice, but sooner or later some misfortune will befall the vendor,
793 or some of his family, and on consulting the *bay* (soothsayer) he will be
593 informed that his having sold some one is the cause; he will be advised to give a cow, sheep, or goat to the *Ten'dan*'. He will give the offering to the land, saying: 'My father, there was a famine, and some one sold his own son, and he has brought these things. Receive them and prevent headache and belly-ache, and give them to the land.'

769 I asked my informant why he used his father's spirit as an inter-
793 mediary. He replied, 'My ancestor knew the land before myself; all
783 our ancestors are in the ground, which is a *bagere*' (shrine).

Duties of the Ten'dan' in Connexion with the Making of a New Farm:
793 The man about to make a new farm will sacrifice to his ancestor through
782 the head of his compound. He will then take a fowl to the *kpasodan*'[1]
241 (the tenant of that land) who will give the offering to his ancestor.
427 This tenant had originally approached the *Ten'dan*' before acquiring the land, and the sub-tenant, therefore, apparently need not again do so. A *Ten'dan*', on giving land to any one for the first time, will ask for fowls (not white ones), one for his father, one for the land. 'After sacrificing, I will conduct the man to the land, take a hoe, break the ground, and tell the man that he may begin cultivating. I show him the boundaries of his farm. I need not tell him that anything he finds on the land is mine; he knows that already. He knows, too, that if he ever refuses to allow any one to pass over his land, or if he is greedy about his crops, not giving some to those who are hungry, I have the power to drive him from the land.'

793 'The *Ten'dan*' makes the land good.' 'The *Ten'dan*' owns (or rather
425 owned, for in many places I found this ancient prerogative usurped by the Chiefs) all lost cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, fowls, iron, hoes, axes, and brass ornaments. A *Ten'dan*' is never succeeded by his brother
[292] or by his son. This hat [referring to the distinctive string hat worn by *Ten'dan*'] is not a rich thing. Any one in a section may become *Ten'dan*'.'

Again: 'When the Mampruse, under *Misore*, first came here, they captured a man near a well who said he was the *Ten'dan*' of Gbeo. Later on *Misore* found other *Ten'dam*' at Bare, Ka, and Kundugu. He did not kill them, but appointed them to sacrifice to the land and show him her *kyibir* (avoidances, Nankane *kyisiri*), and rights—avoidance of blood, right of *Ten'dan*' to lost property or anything found on the

[1] Nankane, *Kusodana*.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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778 with congealed blood and fowls' feathers. The top was protected with the usual broken pot.

'Into the first, B, come the spirits of three persons to receive flour-water and fowls; they help me to find wives and children. The second, C, is my *Ɣini* who sent me down and gave me life and my Ten'dan'ship.

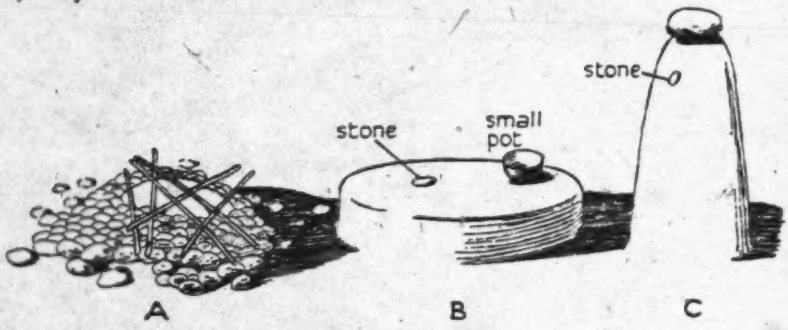

FIG. 67

It helps me to get life, women and children. God kept me formerly, afterwards he sent me.'

Facing these two shrines, and close to the wall of the *zoŋo* hut, were three more shrines, see Fig. 67.

B is the *Ɣini* of Sayebere's father, Pirun. A he called a *Ɣobog'*. A consisted of a heap of round stones with sticks laid on top, surrounding a larger stone sunk in the ground. 'The small round stones are there for the *tobog'* to throw at anything bad coming into the compound. The *tobog'* is *tim* (medicine) to protect me and give me life,' he said, 'It belonged to my father'. I think there is little doubt but that this shrine was for the spirit of a man whom Sayebere's father had killed. (Compare the Nankanse *tobega*.) C was a tall conical shrine, with [769] a stone let into the mud surface, called *duɣ-kpaleg*; 'It was my father's *bogere*,' said Sayebere. 'The power of my hat and skin are in it. When I sacrifice to it, I call all the spirits of the old *Ten'dan'* and of my father to assemble and drink water, striking the stone let into the side with the stone which rests on top.'

778 769 [171] *Shrines Inside the Compound*: Inside the compound in the yard, called in Talene *dendɔɣ* (in Nankane *zinzaka*), is a large grain-store (*bur*; Nankane *bare*) with a chameleon (*nangan*; Nankane *ngana*) in bas-relief on the side (see Fig. 68; Sayebere's hand is resting on the chameleon[1]). This is the shrine of his father's father's wife, a certain

[1] Compare Fig. 30, which shows a similar shrine among the Nankanse.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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Bama. At the foot of this grain-store were other shrines, seen rather indistinctly in the photograph.

One is the shrine for the spirit of a woman called Tapur, who was a co-wife to Bama, both being wives of Sayebere's paternal grandfather. Another is a shrine of Bama. There was also a large stone. 'Bama asked for this through a soothsayer.'

Moving further round the grain-store we come to another series of shrines which are illustrated in the photographs, Figs. 69–70.

In Fig. 69 A is the shrine of the *Ten'dan's* own mother, Kurug; the actual spirit is in the head of a hoe let into the clay; B, a log of wood with a stone on top. I seem to have omitted to record what this was; C is a pot out of which an infant which has become ward of a spirit is given to drink.

Fig. 70 Sayebere called a *tim bager*', 'But,' he added, 'it is also called *anoa-dok* (a mouth pot).'[1] He was in a state of great trepidation lest I should uncover it, saying, holding his nostrils as he spoke, 'It is my life. When I sacrifice to it I say, "Mouth pot receive and protect me from mouths".' It had, he said, many avoidances; these included: Passing behind its owner when he was eating; carrying a flaming faggot past it; mention of the word moon (*mwarega*) while its owner was eating.

The fetish consisted of a pot, covered with another broken pot, a bow, bundle of arrows, and a quiver. The bow, arrows, and quiver had, he said, been added to the pot after consultation with a soothsayer.

Bogere and Bagere: There seems a distinction between these shrines so named, which hardly appears to exist among the Nankanse.

'A *bogere*,' said my Talena informant, 'you fetch from your mother's country after she is dead. You go to your mother's father's compound, and take some earth from the *bagere* of your mother's father and put this in a calabash, which your wife will carry home. She must not speak to any one except her husband on the return journey. This soil will be put in a horn and is called my mother's *bogere*. Your mother's spirit may have become an iron bangle, that is a *bagere*; a *bogere* is like a shade to a *bagere*. A man's house may become 'bitter'; he consults and is told that it is his mother who wants a room. He makes one; that is a *bagere*. After that, he will go to his mother's home and bring earth from the mound which has been made there for his mother's father's spirit, and bring it home, and build a new mound with the

[1] See p. 301.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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new soil and the old. This new mound is a *bogere*. When the *bogere* comes, the *bagere* has become strong. When he wants to sacrifice he will say: "My mother, call your father."

'A mother's spirit has power over her son. Suppose your mother's spirit wants to punish (*ey*, lit. to "do") her son, and the father's spirit wishes to prevent her doing so, the mother will say to her husband, "Had I died while in conception, would you have had this child?"'

Among the Nankanse the word *bugere* or *bogere* is used only in connexion with a *bakologo* shrine. An ordinary *bagere* has no *bogere*, but when a soothsayer's shrine is made, in which is, e.g., the soothsayer's mother's mother's spirit, he will fetch earth from his grandmother's town from the *bagere* shrine of her father. This is brought home in a small pot and becomes the *bugere* or *bogere* of the *bakologo*. 'It gives the power to the *bakologo*.'

A Seance attended at Tɔngo: A woman had died from snake-bite, and after she had been buried a soothsayer was brought to her husband's compound to be consulted about the cause of her death. The family of the dead woman was represented by an Elder from her section. The ceremony began by the consultant holding the soothsayer's bag with both hands and saying, '*N' gyi i lugeri ka kye i nor*' (I hold your sides, but not your mouth). The soothsayer then began to rattle (see Fig. 71), and said, '*N ba Ɣin, n bol i, la i bol i banam, ka ba tana zin, mam mi nireba n zi wa, ka n po mi bay bol ma sere yi na bay de n be, te te*'. (My father's *Ɣin*, I call you, and you will call your fathers and they will come and sit down. I know these people sitting (here), but I do not know the reason that they call me. You will know what it is; give us).

He then began to sing:

'*Golugdan, Kanbung mwan lang kai bagere. Ɣi na bay surdan. Kpolebeo saam zeret; mam kpalim la popelimi koy yiri, ma mam kpelim mwee.*' (*Golugdan, Kanbung*, mere supposition is not (proper) soothsaying. You will know the one who is angry. Bad *dawa dawa* seeds spoil soup. I entered a hole [1]; I became infected with misfortune; I was obedient; now I have no house. Mother, I am still rattling). The soothsayer now emptied out the contents of his bag on the ground; the consultant held the end of the wand and went through the customary performance of picking out objects with it, the soothsayer singing the while. The wand seemed to search among the miscellaneous oddments, pounced on the hoof of a cow, on a fragment of a calabash,

[1] He refers to his having worked in the gold mines.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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FIG. 72. Ancestral shrines

[facing p. 356]

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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on a gourd seed, on a hair ball from the stomach of a cow. I was later told that all this was interpreted as meaning that the father of the dead woman's husband had failed to give to his ancestor one of the cows which he had received for a daughter, hence vengeance had been taken on his son's wife. 787 761 769

After the seance a fowl was killed; this, falling on its back, was taken as proof that what the soothsayer had said was correct.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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some of the water from this calabash on the ground, saying: 'Your day is drawing near, and I wish to pour water for you that the corn may be good. Your moon stands.' A little only of the water is poured out, but the remainder is kept until the next moon, which is the *Daa mey* (or 'real' *Daa*). The first water is called *Ko'-beet* (bad water); the water poured out later is called *Ko'soŋ* (good water). Until the *Ten'dan'* of Bade has performed this ceremony no one may begin to hold the custom; we dance thirty nights at the grove. Seven days after the bad water is poured out, beer and a fowl are given to the land with the words:

'*Misore* and his father wish to come forth; receive, and let the women and children come out to dance and let the men meet them there. Prevent headache and belly-ache and may everything bad on the land (snakes, scorpions) hide away.'

As they dance they sing: *La pug dill* (the corn is blooming).

At the end of thirty days the Bade *Ten'dan'* pours out the rest of the water on the ground, saying: 'This is the good water I am pouring to-day; may the land become good; may women bear children and the corn become good.' He pours out the whole of the water. The *Daa mey* has now arrived and the people dance for fifteen nights, singing: *Laa moo zimi* (It [the corn] is red). Every one assembles by the full moon at the grove called *Pusig* (the name of a tree now no longer standing).

The *Ten'dan'* of Gbeo sacrifices at *Misore's* grave.[1] When he reaches the grove, he takes some beer, flour, and a fowl, which the Chief of Tɔngo has given him, and sacrifices at the spot where the *pusig* tree used to stand, saying to the land: 'The Chief gives me these things for you because the days (of the festival) are ending. We wish to return the drums to the house; allow the women and children to sleep in peace; allow the men to go hunting.' He then makes the sacrifices.

The drums, called *Tusgunwaa*, are kept by the Chief and are never brought out except at this ceremony or at a death. '*Daa* is a dance on the land that it may know all is well.'

Formerly the day of sowing was common to all, so all harvests became ripe at the same time. Now people plant independently, so that the reaping is done at different times. The *Da koom* may not be held until all the *nara* is cut, so that the date is not now constant.

[1] See *History*, Chapter XXXIII.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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751 778 the doorway of the *zɔŋ* hut stands a post with a large stone on top, and a long stick, bent in the shape of a butterfly net and bound round with leaves. 'I tie up the lightning with this', said my informant. On [515] the ground near the stick is a pot containing 'roots' in a decoction in which the inmates of the compound bathe. 'I also use this *sa-bagr* (lightning shrine) to bring rain, only the lightning I tie.'

778 All the above may be seen in Fig. 87. On the left of this doorway is a shrine (*ba bagr*) of the spirit 'of the owner of the compound' (an ●769 ancestor?) with a cow horn the remains of a past sacrifice hanging on the hut wall above it. To the left of this again is another shrine, that of the 'owner's' mother. Resting on the *ba-bagr* is a pot, called a *ba' bugr*. 'This pot is the shrine of spirits once served by my father and my elder brother. I brought some earth from it (a *bagr*?) and put it in the pot, so I now say when sacrificing, "My father receive these offerings and give to your *bugr*", instead of saying, "My father receive and give to your father". I own my grandfather's *Wen* (Nankane *Ŷini*), it can descend (on my death) to whoever he (the spirit) names, but the spirit of our ancestor always goes to the eldest.'

351 343 [534] 342 Passing now through the main entrance, between two grass-roofed huts, one of which is the *zɔŋ*, the other called *nos dog* (fowl house), we enter the *zan-pak* (cattle-kraal). The cattle in this case were in charge of Fulani herdsmen who were paid by being given the milk. Inside this yard were two other huts, one for goats and sheep, and one for a horse. Surrounding this yard were four suites of rooms called *dog* (compare Nankane *deo*, pl. *detto*). These *dog* were those of:

(*a*) *Ŷi-dan's* wife.
(*b*) An unmarried son of the *Ŷi-dan*.
(*c*) The wife of the *Ŷi-dan's* younger brother.
(*d*) *Dog* of another of *Ŷi-dan's* wives.

351 342 778 755 Inside the main yard is a hut with two doors opposite each other called *zon-tug* (lit. pass straight through), where the women sit. The second doorway of this hut leads right into the yard (*zak*) of one of the *dog* (suites) in which is a shrine called *meŋ Wen* (lit. one's own God), a stone let into a circular mud mound. Beside this shrine is a pot full of roots, called *dendeuk duk* or chameleon's pot. 'I saw two chameleons one day copulating. I was told this is a forbidden thing, so I went to one who had medicine for this and he told me to bring roots. When a child is born to me, I bathe it with water from the roots. Before the *baa* (soothsayer) told me to do this, my children used to die.'

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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deceased's senior wife (the eldest son's maternal uncle) because a man's senior wife owns the compound and has all the work of building it up. During a man's lifetime, the eldest son may not look into his father's bag or into his grain-store, or make use of anything personally used by his father.'[1]

Widows and Children: 'Widows go to the heir, but if he does not want them, they will know this, and already have spoken to the men whom they wish to marry. Before their heads have been shaved, they must not on any account have sexual intercourse with any one. Any man who is guilty of doing so, is said "to have cut the widows' strings" (*okoa pɔkɔ nwis*) and any infant whom such an adulterer looks upon will die. These widows' strings are made by an old woman who has ceased to bear children, and, after the funeral custom, she will cut them. After this they will appear in fresh leaves and people will know they are eligible to remarry. They will marry a clansman, not some one from another town. A son may not marry any of his father's widows if the father has ever had sexual intercourse with them. The deceased's brother, if not a *nyere*, may do so. The leaves which widows wear are *tanpiba* leaves (shea butter leaves). If a wife ever puts these on (during his lifetime) her husband will divorce her, and claim back the cows.[2]

'If the widow goes outside the clan of the late husband to marry, the heir will claim from her parents the cows paid, but deducting one cow for each child borne by her. Her father in turn will recover these cows from the man whom she then marries. The children then remain with the late husband's family. Should all the cows not have been paid when the first husband died, the heir, or whichever of the clansmen take her, have to pay the balance due, otherwise no new payments are necessary. It is taboo for the heir to take for himself two widows of the same man. He chooses which he will have and gives the other to his brother, that is, if these persons want them, otherwise they may marry a clansman.' Other customs in connexion with widows and the funeral custom will be dealt with under that heading.

Children: 'The children of the deceased belong to his fellow clansman who marries the widow, but across the Volta, among the Kusase whom we call the people of the West (*Toondem*), children of widows belong to the ghost (i.e. the late husband). If the widow marries outside her late husband's clan, any children she had by her first husband remain the property of his clansman, i.e. of the heir.'

[1] Compare the Nankanse.

[2] Compare Nankanse custom.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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of the head of the compound will, one evening, tell the bride to take fire (a faggot) to the bridegroom's hut in order that she may have light 'to sweep the floor', and she will add, 'you need not return'. Next morning people will know that the girl is So-and-so's wife. (I asked my informant if the youth for whom this marriage had been arranged knew all about it. He replied: 'The father of the youth would always be performing small services for his *dem* (in-laws), such, for example, as sending them fire-wood. The future bridegroom would be used as a messenger on such occasions and in this manner would get to know his future wife.') A man's senior 'father' is responsible for finding the cows for the bride-price (*sul*). If a man wants a second or third wife, he will help his father by giving some of his own cows, if he has got any by his own labours. 'If your father is too poor and your mother's brother is a rich man, he may pay for the cows for your wife, but that becomes a debt, for if you do not pay him back, he will claim your children after your death. You will pay him back by using the cows you receive for your own daughter.'

'A son-in-law will work on his *dem-pok's* ground-nut farm (*suma-pog*) once a year and help her in the sowing and harvest, and also assist his father-in-law in building. He will do all this until his wife bears him a child and then cease doing so, because then he will be looking out for a new wife and have then to work for these new in-laws. Every new harvest he will take new beer (*da'-palem*) and a guinea-fowl and go with his wife to visit his parents-in-law. On this occasion, the wife becomes like a man, by virtue of her husband, and gives the guinea-fowl as an offering to her father's spirit, or if he is alive, to his *Wen* (*Yini* shrine). If she were an unmarried girl at home, she could not do so. A son-in-law attends his parents-in-law's funeral, taking a sheep and goat and beer. He will also attend a brother-in-law's funeral taking a pot of beer "to pour on the grave" (*se yaug*). A son-in-law will also assist in digging a parent-in-law's grave, and even sleep at his village and resume digging next morning and dig out all the stones. When we dig a grave and come down to rock, we generally place an egg there, and fill in the hole, but when a man has many sons-in-law they will dig up the rock. As long as a man's wife has not borne a child, the son-in-law must send his mother-in-law five baskets of grain each new harvest. He stops doing so when she has a child, for after that they will at once demand payment of the *sul* (bride-price).'

'A man must respect his parents-in-law; if he offends them, he

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920) 1932
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764 for a cloth'. When the skin is put on the corpse, the tail comes in front and the three cowries are placed on it. This gives rise to a Kusase oath [195] *M'ba ne o ligidi ta*[1] (My father and his three cowries). Only the back of the goatskin is used; the flesh and the skin off the belly are cooked outside the compound and must only be partaken of by those who have lost their fathers.

764 765 [314] When a man dies, his wife's brother will bring roots which are boiled in water in which the widows bathe for three days, and after the third day the roots are buried (by a man who has lost his wife) in the cattle-kraal, or behind the compound. Each widow is then given a fruit of the *kponkporog* palm tree, from which the contents of the shell have been removed and "medicine" from "roots" put in its place. For a month, a little of this must be put in all the food which they eat. When they see the new moon, they will put aside this fruit and begin to prepare beer for the second funeral custom which is called *ku dar*. This date will be fixed by the *kudan*—the one in charge of the funeral custom—who is the heir. The first part of the funeral is called *ku-masir*[2] (the wet funeral). *Ku-dar* (the second funeral) is 765 derived from the word *dar*, to give some one permission to go off. "He 769 (the dead) will not go until all these things have been done." A day is fixed to begin the making of the beer, called *ku-malem* or *zel* (the setting of the funeral (beer). On that day, all the daughters of the deceased, who have married elsewhere, assemble at the compound of the deceased. Every one brings a fowl and a guinea-fowl; grain food

[171] [1] The Nankanse of Winkogo and the Black and Red *Tendana* have a similar oath, i.e. *Kase perega la ligidi ita*.

[535 831] [2] The night of the *ku-masir* custom, there is a dance at which the women choose men (*poa-leasig*). All the 'strangers' line up with the townspeople opposite them. The 'stranger' women choose from the townsmen and the townswomen from the men who are 'strangers'. A girl comes forward and touches the man of her choice with her finger. Some men will be chosen by two or three girls, another man may not be chosen at all. Such a one, *o nyu kuk* (has drunk of a bitter tree). These girls, except those who are married, pass the night with the man or men whom they have selected, sleeping on one mat with them, but they do not have sexual intercourse with each other. It would be a disgraceful thing if they did so. When I expressed scepticism as to this, I was informed that in the old days youths and maidens took great pride in resisting such temptations, and sought it rather than avoided it. The two sexes everywhere joined in games, dances, and swimming. A youth's ambition was to be renowned as a hunter, or good farmer, or wrestler. There was a firm belief that a profligate would be killed by an arrow in his first fight, or bitten by a snake. My informant said Europeans separated boys and girls in our schools and told boys not to think about women, and in consequence young boys were now always thinking about such things.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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is prepared, and the eldest son will kill a sheep and make food for his father's spirit. "Next day is the *ku-dar*, but the spirit has still to get his bow and quiver. All the food he has been given, he will take to his father and then return for his bow and quiver." The spirit will make use of all these things. I sometimes dream I see my father driving the flocks before him', said my informant.

The date of the *ku-kweem* or dry funeral depends on food supplies. It may be held at once after the *ku-dar*, or a year, or even four years, later. 'The spirit must be patient about this.' A day having been settled for the *ku-kweem*, all those concerned are informed, and the day before the beer is finally ready, all the relatives, sisters and sisters' children, daughters and daughters' children, and mother's relations, assemble at the town of the deceased. New *pokor nwi* (widows' strings) are put round the waists of the widows and their heads are completely shaved. Sons-in-law will bring baskets of grain food and all the children of the deceased will also shave. Towards evening, the widows, who have not been taken by the heir, will choose new husbands, for they will have to leave the compound before the quiver is brought out. After shaving, widows are made to pass through the doorway of the main entrance to the compound. One who has been unchaste during the period of her widowhood will refuse to do so and will struggle. She will then confess the name of the adulterer. This man, when he sees he has been exposed, will run away to his in-laws and from there send a messenger to the Elders of his section begging their forgiveness. He will be told to bring a large fowl and a pot of beer to purify the land. A hole will be dug in the ground, the *Tenedan*' will come and sacrifice the fowl, saying: 'Land, receive this beer, for children have sinned—a matter of a vagina—may the offence be buried'. As he says so he fills in the hole. A male relative of the adulterer and one representing the woman, sit beside the hole. They each put their mouth to the calabash of beer and drink some. A leaf has been put in the beer to represent the leaves worn by women. One man crosses his leg over the other, to symbolize sexual intercourse. The dregs of the beer and the leaf are buried in the hole. The fowl is also killed and its blood allowed to drip in the hole, into which its feathers are also put. The fowl is roasted and eaten, but not by him who brought it. The head of the compound to which the adulteress belongs, sends a fowl to the head of her section with the guilty woman. He sacrifices the fowl on his *yab bagr* (ancestral shrine) saying: 'A woman went out from her compound and they have got to bring her back, must you

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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throughout its past; and it is, at the same time, the embryo of its future organization. A Tale lineage cannot be dissociated from its temporal extension.

A maximal lineage is fixed with reference to its founding ancestor, who is the focus of its unity and the symbol of its corporate identity. From time to time its unity and identity become explicit in the common cult of this ancestor and in the regulation of intra-lineage relations which hinges on it. The ancestor cult is the calculus of the lineage system, the mechanism by means of which the progressive internal differentiation of a lineage is ordered and is fitted into the existing structure. It is also the principal ideological bulwark of the lineage organization.

Every maximal lineage is continually expanding and proliferating through the fission of its minor segments. But though its span is thus constantly increasing, its form does not alter. It has a fixed centre and a fixed locus we might say. In theory it always remains the same lineage, and new maximal lineages cannot arise through the splitting up of an existing maximal lineage. It is a unit of common agnatic descent, and no branch of it can ever repudiate this. In theory ties of descent can never lapse. A maximal lineage is also an exogamous unit, and no branch of it can contract out of this bond.

To the contemporary observer the Tale lineage system appears as a stable and finally established factor of the constituted social structure, the ground plan of which was laid down in the distant past by processes which are still going on. In any maximal lineage, therefore, the fission of minor segments does not alter the equilibrium of the major segments at any given time. Changes in minimal lineages, in fact, cannot alter the equilibrium of any segment greater than the minimal. This is reflected in the naming of lineages and their segments. Every lineage is named after its founder, and as long as a lineage persists it bears the same name. Thus the names of segments greater than the minimal may be regarded as fixed once for all. A lineage is called the 'children (*biis*) of so-and-so' or 'the house (*yir*) or people of the house (*yidem*) of so-and-so'. These ways of denoting a lineage are interchangeable. A lineage may also be described as a 'room' (*dug*) of a superordinate lineage. This indicates that it is being thought of as a segment of the latter.

This formal analysis will be more easily understood from the diagram which follows. It shows, in a simplified way, the structure of a major segment of a maximal lineage which is assumed to have only two major segments. The major segment not included must be homologous with the major segment shown here since a lineage necessarily divides into segments of equal order. Similarly, the relations of the two major segments of our hypothetical maximal lineage to each other are repeated, at a lower order of segmentation, in the relations of the major segments of each major segment to one another. In the diagram the relations of subsegments X and Y to each other, within the framework of Major Segment I, are identical in form with those of Major Segment I and its brother (*sunzu*) segment, Major Segment II, and this rule holds for every subsequent order of segmentation. We shall later on study the interests, rights, and obligations associated with such an ordered series

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587 When, some forty years ago, a Tongo man married a Zoo widow and his
X618 son was shot dead in revenge by a Zoo man, the Chief of Tongo forbade
a raid of retaliation. It was, my informants said, a just vengeance since
[682] 'we don't marry the widows of Zoo people'.

X618 Again, it would be a serious breach of solidarity for a member of one of
the sub-clans to abduct the wife of a member of any other, and I have
627 never heard of such a case. Warfare between them is inconceivable, so
the injured group would have to rely upon moral pressure through the
chief and elders of the offender's community. But these measures would
undoubtedly succeed, even in these days when rebellious young men can
flee to foreign lands.

X618 This is likewise the widest extension of a restriction which holds with
587 greatest force for the segments of a maximal lineage belonging to the
same sub-clan, e.g. for the segments of Tongo *inter se*. In a lesser degree
it applies also to ex-wives. A man who marries the former wife of another,
even if the marriage was severed for just and accepted reasons, incurs the
hostility of the first husband's entire lineage both towards himself perso-
nally and towards his clansmen as a group. Reprisals will be taken when
an opportunity occurs. When the parties are clansmen, feelings about such
acts become very bitter, and the more so the closer the tie. Marriages of
this kind take place from time to time, producing conflicts and reprisals
but not disruption of clanship ties.

X618 Another proof of kinship (*mabiirət*) usually cited by the natives is that
721 warfare between the four sub-clans was forbidden. They were allies in
war in the old days. They did not all come to one another's help, nor
were they each other's sole allies. But they could call upon one another's
assistance in the name of kinship. The recollections of the oldest men go
back no farther than the time of their grandparents, four or five genera-
tions ago. They tell of ancient fights in which Tongo, Sie, and Yaməlɔg
supported one another; but Biuk, it seems, maintained an isolationist
policy in the wars and feuds of its Tale kinsmen. The greatest war still
remembered in tale and anecdote occurred forty or fifty years ago.
Yaməlɔg became involved in it; and when Ba'ari raised the war-cry
against Yaməlɔg, Sie and Tongo attacked Ba'ari on the flanks.

Mosuor bïïs: a Maximal Lineage

X618 These four branches of Mosuor's agnatic posterity (*tu'a*) constitute
what appears to be a single, dispersed clan—the only clan of this type in
Taleland; more accurately, it is a maximal lineage—the most inclusive
agnatic lineage to which any descendant of Mosuor in the male line (i.e.
any member of the four branches) can belong. In the eyes of the natives
an important qualification is that the four branches are of equal status
though graded in seniority. Tongo is the most senior because it remained
in possession of the original home of the clan—*'ti waabi daboog*, the
ancient home-site of all of us', they say—and has retained the custody of
Mosuor's grave and *bɔyar*, the shrine which symbolizes the perpetuity,
X618 identity, and common ancestry of the entire maximal lineage. Yaməlɔg,
769 Sie, and Biuk follow in that order; but they no longer participate in
sacrifices to Mosuor. Each of them has its own ancestral *bɔyar*, enshrining

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its founding ancestors and its own differential line of agnatic descent. Each sub-clan sacrifices separately to its own founding ancestor. Mosuor is regarded as the common ancestor of all the sub-clans, but the cult of his shrine is the sole prerogative and duty of the Tongo branch of his posterity. According to Tale interpretation, a long period of territorial separation, bringing about political independence of one another, has inevitably resulted in the corresponding religious autonomy of each unit. A *bɔyar* cannot be separated from the grave and the home-site (*daboog*) of the ancestor it enshrines. Though the custody and cult of Mosuor's *bɔyar* are the exclusive province of the Tongo branch of the clan, because residence, lineage, and ancestor cult must have a concurrent continuity, these rights and duties are held to be exercised on behalf of the whole clan.

An unusual incident showed how the cult of Mosuor's *bɔyar* is related to the constitution of the clan. It was on the occasion of the great sacrifice to Mosuor and the other early ancestors of Tongo described below (pp. 53–4). When the beer was being distributed, a man called out that there was a young man from Yaməlag present. This was quite unprecedented. The elders began to discuss the situation vigorously. The people of Yaməlag had no right to attend such a sacrifice; but they were Mosuor's agnatic descendants, and if one of them turned up by chance, could he be excluded? 'Is not Mosuor their ancestor as well as ours?' At this point the Yaməlag man stepped forward. He said that the question was of no importance; he was not a complete outsider intruding on the ritual of people not connected with him, neither was he there as a representative of Yaməlag; he had come solely in his personal capacity, to 'scrounge' some of the beer and meat, and not to take part in the sacrifice. In short, though he could not be turned away from the sacrifice (as, say, a Zubiuŋ or Zoo man would have been) without offence to the clan ancestors, his presence there did not signify a claim by Yaməlag to be represented at such rites, nor would it establish a precedent for the future. On this understanding, so amicably reached, he was given a courtesy portion of beer and meat.

As with the ancestor cult, so with the chiefship. Each sub-clan has its own chiefship (*na'am*), in keeping with its territorial and political autonomy, but the prototypical chiefship is that of Tongo, since it was established by Mosuor. Just as the four sub-clans are 'brothers' (*sunzɔp*) to one another, so their chiefs are 'brothers' (*sunzɔp*) equal in status but graded in seniority of rank, Tongo being the most senior and Biuk the most junior.

The equality of status of the four sub-clans is paralleled in the structure of the maximal lineage which they constitute. In their relations of clanship they are distant 'brothers' (*sunzɔp*), treating one another as relatively autonomous lineages. A Tongo man, when his conduct is determined by the norms of clanship, thinks of Yaməlag, Sie, or Biuk as a corporate unit. Its internal structure is of no relevance to him. At any of these places, in any relations of clanship, he represents Tongo, taken as a unit, irrespective of his position in its internal structure.

The children of Mosuor think of their maximal lineage as finally and

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Assimilated lineages, therefore, all over Taleland, though thoroughly absorbed into the structure of the sub-clan or clan, suffer the same disabilities as the more precisely differentiated attached lineages; they cannot, however, make a virtue of this, as the latter sometimes can; they cannot explain away their status. To tax a person, openly or explicitly, with being the descendant of a slave (*da'abɔr bii*) is one of the deadliest insults, however remote his slave ancestry may be. This is more than a matter of etiquette. It amounts, in certain circumstances, to blasphemy against the spirit of the man who originally adopted this slave ancestor. Thus, under this rule of courtesy to clansmen and respect for ancestors, the status of an assimilated lineage is never commented on publicly unless a serious issue hangs on it or a severe quarrel is involved. This exceptional circumspection about assimilated lineages shows better than anything else their ambiguous position in the clan.

Such elements of the social structure as these are not apparent at first glance. I did not discover the existence of assimilated lineages at Tongo until the end of my first year in the field. To do so it was essential to have a very thorough understanding of the way the lineage system works and of the internal structure of the Tale community. I was able then to notice and to be puzzled by the absence, or self-effacement, of certain people in situations where they would normally be representing their lineage segments. It was not the behaviour to be expected of them if their segments were of equal status with the authentic segments of Mosuor biis. Veiled hints began to have a meaning which confidential informants confirmed.

One of my earliest friends and frankest informants at Tongo was Sayəbazaa, an elder in whom the chief had the greatest confidence and who was universally esteemed for his industry and probity. Sayəbazaa was the head (*kpeem*) of Nəŋsuur yidɛm, a major segment of one of the major segments of Tongo. One of its members held an important and confidential office under the chief. Nəŋsuur yidɛm appeared to be of the true agnatic line of Mosuor. I took this for granted the more readily because, when the Great Festival season came round and all the elders of Tongo were summoned to the chief's house so that a diviner could be consulted, it was Sayəbazaa who consulted the diviner on behalf of the chief and the whole of Tongo, in order to ascertain what offerings must be given to Mosuor and the chiefly ancestors.

Nevertheless, Nəŋsuur yidɛm is an assimilated lineage whose founding ancestor is vaguely said to have arrived with Mosuor. Though almost completely absorbed by the authentic line of Mosuor biis, a last barrier remains, which I discovered only through one of the most striking of the events which revealed the existence and status of accessory lineages at Tongo. It showed also how there is a continuous process of adjustment going on in every sector of the social structure, resolving the tensions and contradictions latent in it.

It was an occasion of historic importance marking the climax of one phase in the absorption of the accessory lineages by the authentic lineages of Tongo. The occasion was that of the great thanksgiving sacrifice to the founding ancestors of Tongo, Mosuor and his son Sɛyahəg, which took place in 1936. Beer and animals were contributed by the chief, who gave

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a cow, and by all the segments of the sub-clan—the heads bringing a sheep each, the elders next in seniority in each segment a goat each, and the junior elders bringing fowls. It was noticeable that assimilated and attached lineages also brought contributions of fowls, by express command of the chief. Never before in the memory of the oldest men had so many animals been slaughtered in sacrifice to the ancient ancestors (*yaabkɔrəg*, pl. *yaakɔrəb*) of the sub-clan on one day; and a great concourse of men of all ages, such as had never in living memory gathered for such a sacrifice, assembled for the occasion. Among them were several members of assimilated and attached lineages, but, surprisingly, none of the senior elders of these lineages. The authentic segments were there in full force, their senior elders acting as their formal representatives and taking the lead in the rites. In the days of their youth, some of the old men murmured with disapproval, only the heads of the authentic lineages used to be present at sacrifices to Mosuor. A noisy crowd of men of all ages would have been considered altogether out of keeping with so sacred and esoteric a *bɔyar* as that of the founding ancestor. But times have changed; these are the chief's orders; and if it is obligatory for every authentic lineage to be represented at such a sacrifice, it is also the right of any of their male members to participate if they wish. There were whispers, also, about 'strangers' (*saam*) being present, and I thought, at first, that they must be referring to me.

The ceremony proceeded with the usual alternation of reverential solemnity and conviviality and lasted far into the night. But for two incidents one might have forgotten the presence of those men who by the strict canon of agnatic descent were intruders. There was a long delay at the outset while the elders of the segment which has the custody of the graves and shrines of the clan founders (Lebhtiis yidɛm) held a private conference at the house of their lineage head. This aroused the suspicion of some of the better informed men amongst the crowd waiting impatiently for their arrival. Next day we learnt that these suspicions were justified. Lebhtiis yidɛm had been debating with some acrimony, though inconclusively, what was the right line to take about the presence of members of accessory lineages.

Later, there was another hitch just before the culminating rite, the actual sacrifice to Mosuor's *bɔyar*. There were whispered consultations. An impetuous member of Lebhtiis yidɛm protested that the intruders should be shut out, but he was overruled by an elder who counselled moderation in view of the chief's wishes.

Next day these incidents were threshed out by the chief when all the elders met to congratulate him on the success of the sacrifices. He rated Lebhtiis yidɛm scathingly for their reactionary conduct. 'Times have changed', he said in the course of a long harangue, 'and you must disregard those old tales. Anyhow, you are only my deputies. It is I who really own Mosuor's *bɔyar*, and it is I who will suffer the penalties if Mosuor is offended by what I am doing. And what if some people are of slave descent? They won't steal the *bɔyar* from you. If a man has a slave he calls him to come and join in sacrifices to his ancestors; his slave is like his son. Mosuor established (*naam*, lit. created) all of us, he owns

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all of us (i.e. those of alleged slave descent as well). Who are you to decide who is or is not to be allowed to take part in sacrifices to him?' 618x 769●

Crest-fallen, the supporters of the *status quo ante* begged the chief's pardon. It was a victory for the forces of community integration and a personal triumph for the chief over the cleavages due to the strict application of the canon of agnatic descent.

One of the chief's most intimate and influential elders commented to me afterwards, cautiously but with a hint of regret, that soon it would become impossible to withhold the chiefship from the accessory lineages now that they had practically won the right to participate in the most esoteric ritual cult of the true agnatic sodality. But the battle for consolidation is not yet over. The presence of some members of accessory lineages at the sacrifices was not part of a deliberate scheme to gain equality of status but was an unthinking reaction to the whole situation—the unusual publicity of the ceremony, its emphasis on an all-embracing solidarity of the whole sub-clan, and the chief's insistence on interpreting this to mean all the people of Tongo and not only those of true agnatic descent from Mosuor. Some elders of the accessory lineages were as dubious about the affair as some of the elders of authentic lineages. To take part in sacrifices from which one's fathers and grandfathers (*banam niyaanam*) had been rigidly excluded might well be an offence against one's own ancestors, even though the chief had taken the responsibility on himself. Members of accessory lineages do not resent their disfranchisement as a disability to be fought against, but accept it as part of the fixed order of society validated by the whole religious system. 618x

Thus these elders of the accessory lineages will not take it for granted that they now have the same rights as the authentic lineages. They are aware, also, that the occurrence has left behind a good deal of hidden resentment which may, at some future crisis, precipitate a violent reaction against the inclusion of accessory lineages in the ritual brotherhood of Mosuor biis. The forces of integration are strong at Tongo; but the genealogical cleavages in its lineage structure are so fundamental that this historic sacrifice may yet prove to be a warning against their abrogation rather than a precedent for it.

This episode brought out more vividly than anything I had previously encountered the significance of the ancestral graves and shrines, in particular of Mosuor's *bɔyar*, as the focus of the sub-clan's unity and the symbol of its corporate identity; for it was obvious that until they were able to participate on equal terms in sacrifices to this *bɔyar*, the accessory lineages would not be regarded as, or feel themselves to be, completely absorbed by the authentic lineages. 618x 778

Tongo, we may conclude, though it is more closely knit than Sie, is also an open system in its lineage structure; and this is equally true of Yamələg and Biuk. This peculiarity of the clan organization is more precisely apparent in the asymmetrical linkages of the component lineages of the different sub-clans of Mosuor biis. It is evident from our analysis that the ties of clanship summarily posited by the natives as linking *all* of Tongo with *all* of Sie, *all* of Yamələg, and *all* of Biuk, measured by the strict canon of agnatic descent as well as by the critical norms of clanship, 618x 184

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415
●769

(*a*) Elders of a Maximal Lineage assemble to sacrifice to their Founder.

The Maximal Lineage is a corporate unit: The elders of a maximal lineage, representing all its component segments, assemble to perform a sacrifice on the grave of one of their founding ancestors. Note that (a) only men are present; (b) the members of each segment sit together; (c) the close-packed form of the group, an index of the strong sense of lineage solidarity in such situations.

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769

(*b*) Prayer preceding Sacrifice to Clan Founder.

An episode in the great sacrifice to Mosuor and the other founding ancestors, at Tongo, in 1936. Men of the sub-clan assembled at Mosuor's grave (stones in foreground) and tree shrine (baobab tree). The photograph was taken as the prayer preceding the sacrifice was being offered.

[facing p. 56]

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ing the installation or the funeral of a tɛndaana, both receive sacrifices. But the *Bɔyar*, like its homologue among the Namoos, is more precisely a symbol of the continuity and perpetuity of the clan and its constituent lineages. It is more explicitly a focus of that solidarity of the clan or the lineage which is deemed to follow automatically from the fact of their common agnatic descent. The Earth, on the other hand, though its cult is also intrinsically bound up with the agnatic line, stands rather for the common interests and common values embodied in the customary norms and sanctions of collective life.

It is significant, however, that the *Bɔyar* cult and the Earth cult, both of which serve to express the unity and solidarity of the clan, also serve to emphasize the relative autonomy of its constituent maximal lineages. Each maximal lineage has its private lineage *bɔyar* (*dugni bɔyar*), the shrine of its particular lineage ancestors, worshipped only by members of that lineage, and the *dugni bɔyar* is conceived as itself a part of, or a derivative of, the clan *Bɔyar* (Duunkpalɔg). It is, so to speak, the domestic incarnation of the great External *Bɔyar*. In the same way each maximal lineage has its private Earth shrine, associated specifically with that part of Zubiun which it occupies, and under the sole custody of its own tɛndaana. Both in relation to the *Bɔyar* cult and to the Earth cult, the tɛndaana of each maximal lineage represents the entire lineage. It is through him that these mystical powers are mobilized on behalf of the lineage, and through the joint action of all three tɛndaanas that they are mobilized for the good of the clan.

The integration of the clan on the religious plane is characteristic of its corporate solidarity in all matters of common interest. Every corporate activity presumes the relative autonomy of the three maximal lineages in relation to one another. The unity of the clan is built up on the relative mutual independence of its segments. Common interests emerge as a balance of divergent emphases, and conversely the autonomous interests of the three constituent maximal lineages of the clan are aspects of the common interests of the whole clan. Thus the rights and duties, privileges and obligations, vested in each maximal lineage, through the mutual adjustment and articulation of which corporate action occurs and clan unity emerges, are jealously guarded by each lineage.

Many incidents could be quoted to substantiate this analysis, but one will suffice. When the final rites of installation for the new Kpayara-yayar tɛndaana were being carried out I accompanied him and his lineage elders to Duunkpalɔg, where the most important rite of the series was to be performed. We were soon joined by the Yakɔra representatives. The Yapaasdɛm did not come for another hour or so. Indignant comments were made about their tardiness. It was said to be a chronic fault of theirs, and they were criticized also for neglecting their duty as junior *nuuɔp* who should have come to escort the tɛndaana-elect to Duunkpalɔg. The Yapaasdɛm, said one of the elders, were going the way of all things to-day, scorning established custom and taking the course they found most convenient to themselves. 'In a little while', he stormed, 'we shall all (that is, each maximal lineage) be sacrificing separately.' The other elders protested in a chorus at this, exclaiming, 'Oh no, we won't abandon our

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clanship. But on the day of the harvest festival at Wakii, they send an offering of a fowl and flour to be added to the sacrifices which will be made at the External *Bɔɣar* of Wakii.

This pattern of ritual collaboration between the constituent segments of the clan is common in most of the other Namoo clans. Where a clan consists of one or more Namoo lineages united with one or more non-Namoo lineages, there is usually no common ritual cult, as, for example, at Zoo. The component lineages of such clans might more appropriately be considered as locally contiguous linked lineages.

Ritual collaboration in Namoo clans differs in substance though not in form from the ritual collaboration found in the clans of the Talis, as will be clearer shortly. The Namoos lack the elaborate cult of the External *Bɔɣar* associated with the Great Festivals, and most of their clans are built up round a dominant maximal lineage. In Namoo clans the cult of the founding ancestor corresponds to the cult of the *dugni bɔɣar* among the Talis—that is, the cult of the founding ancestor of a constituent maximal lineage of a composite clan. Thus, unlike the External *Bɔɣar* of the Talis, a Namoo clan *bɔɣar* is kept at the house of the segment head in whose custody it is, in the same way as the particular lineage *bɔɣar* of one of the component lineages of a Talis clan. (The *bɔɣar* itself consists of one or two small pots (*kpatarəg*) inside a shallow platter-like vessel made by chipping off the bottom half of a large pottery basin (*sar*), and covered with another piece of pottery. Like all ritual shrines, it is usually indescribably grimy with the remains of many sacrifices.)

As a general rule, ties of ritual collaboration between corporate units in Taleland always imply the existence of other structural ties. Conversely, all significant ties which define the place of a corporate unit in the whole social system tend to be mirrored in some form of ritual collaboration. This principle is of special significance for the Talis and their congeners.

Ritual Collaboration among the Talis: The External Bɔɣar and the Earth

A. *Zubiuŋ*. We have noted that the unity of a clan such as Zubiuŋ becomes explicit in the cult of their *Bɔɣar*, Duunkpaləg, the common shrine of all the ancestors of its constituent maximal lineages, and in the cult of the Earth. To sacrifice together here means to participate equally in the cults of the *Bɔɣar* and of the Earth, and is an index of the closest ties of clanship. Among the people of Zubiuŋ the synthesis of ritual collaboration with the clan structure is relatively simple and is analogous to what is found among their Namoo neighbours. The three constituent maximal lineages are jointly and equally responsible for the custody and cult of their focal ancestor shrine, the Duunkpaləg *Bɔɣar*. It is described as an External *Bɔɣar* (*yɛŋha bɔɣar*). It is 'outside' in the literal sense of being out-of-doors, in the open, and 'outside' also in the social sense of not being bound exclusively to any one of the three constituent lineages of the clan.

But each lineage, as we have previously noted, also has its *dugni bɔɣar*, 'the *bɔɣar* of the room'. (The term 'room', *dug*, implies that each maximal lineage has a segmentary relationship with the other maximal lineages similar to that of the co-ordinate segments of a single lineage.) The *dugni*

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bɔyar, again, is both literally and socially the domestic replica of the External *Bɔyar*. It is kept at the homestead of the lineage head, and it symbolizes the particular ancestors of that lineage only. Only that particular lineage offers sacrifices through its head to its *dugni bɔyar*, that is, to its own ancestors; all three lineages meet at Duunkpalǝg in ritual homage to all their ancestors. (The *dugni bɔyar* of a Zubiuŋ lineage, as among all the Talis, consists of two small pots embedded in a projecting bulge of the outside wall of the house, together with other sacred paraphernalia, and, as usual, smeared all over with the dried flour, blood, and feathers of many sacrifices.)

The two aspects of the *Bɔyar* cult mark the two poles of clan structure—on the one hand, the relative autonomy of the constituent lineages of the clan; on the other, the unity and the solidarity of the clan, synthesizing these relative autonomies in a wider field of social organization, but according to the same principles of structure that operate to constitute these relatively autonomous units. Though less explicitly, the same pattern of ritual collaboration obtains at Zubiuŋ with respect to the cult of the Earth.

The lineages of other clans with which Zubiuŋ has ties of clanship never participate in sacrifices at Duunkpalǝg or at any of the Zubiuŋ Earth shrines. A linked lineage has ritual ties only with the Zubiuŋ maximal lineage to which it is directly linked, but these ties are very elastic. Thus, in situations in which the corporate identity of one of the constituent maximal lineages of Zubiuŋ is emphasized—for example, in the ceremonies of inducting a new tɛndaana into his office, or in the funeral rites of a deceased tɛndaana—members of the linked lineages of that group are nominally obliged to participate in the exoteric phases of the ceremonies. This obligation, however, is not so rigorous as in the case of the other Zubiuŋ lineages.

B. *Ba'ari*. The pattern of ritual collaboration between the component units of Ba'ari is slightly different. There the focal shrine of the clan is the principal sacred grove (*tɔŋgban*) consecrated to the Earth, Ba'at Da'a. Important sacrifices there, particularly during the Great Festivals, require the presence of all the constituent lineages of Ba'ari, including the accessory lineages. This is not regarded as inconsistent with the fact that one of the attached lineages, Ba'at-Guŋ, is permitted to intermarry with two of the other lineages, though otherwise exercising the rights and obligations of close *tunzɔp*. Ba'ari lacks the cult of the External *Bɔyar*, and the lineage (*dugni*) *bɔyar* of each of its constituent lineages is associated with Ba'at Da'a, which doubles the functions of an External *Bɔyar* and a focal *tɔŋgban*. Ba'at Da'a has, in fact, two ritual aspects. In its esoteric aspect it is the ideological pivot around which the clan revolves. Only the clan takes part in the cult associated with this aspect; linked lineages of other clans have no share in it. It also has an exoteric aspect connected with certain phases of the cycle of the Great Festivals. Again, linked lineages take no part in the ritual that defines this aspect. But the people of Gbizug have a formal role in these rites, and so have Wakii and Yaɣazuor, who are *tunzɔp*-by-courtesy. These clans participate, not in virtue of ties of clanship with Ba'ari, but by reason of their ritual bonds. They have a

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fore, two intersecting fields of politico-ritual relations so adjusted that its loyalties to the other component lineages of one field are counterbalanced by its loyalties to the component lineages of the other field. Both sets of politico-ritual loyalties are correlated with the same sort of social interests, symbolized in a single system of religious concepts and values. Their organization in two complementary configurations around polar symbols checks the dangers of disruptive conflicts that might spring from them. Thus the ties of clanship are regrouped around another axis of social integration. Every maximal lineage is a bridge between a *Bɔyar* congregation and a *Tɛŋ* congregation. In most cases, in fact, the component lineages of a particular *Tɛŋ* congregation all belong to, and in that context represent, different *Bɔyar* congregations, and vice versa. This is the fundamental mechanism of the remarkable politico-ritual equilibrium found among the Talis.

The Network of Ritual Ties between Talis Clans

This network of public ritual ties runs through all the Talis clans. Indeed, as we have mentioned before, in the context of the cycle of the Great Festivals, it embraces both Talis and Namoos in the Tongo district, the clans of the Sie district, and a number of adjacent clans beyond the borders of Taleland. Confining ourselves to the Talis only, we find among them an organization of ritual relations analogous in pattern to the network of clanship ties. Adjacent maximal lineages have fields of ritual relations that overlap each other. They are combined thus into a single system of interwoven chains of ritual ties which spread across all the Talis. The ritual field of each maximal lineage corresponds to the parochial aspects of the *Bɔyar* and the Earth cult, the all-embracing network to their universal aspect.

To illustrate this analysis let us take up again the chain of ritual ties that begins at Ba'ari and follow out its further extension from Gbizug to Tɛnzugu. Gbizug and Gbeog, it will be recollected, are segments of a single clan. The ritual focus of their clan unity is the supreme Earth shrine (*tɔŋgban*) at Gbizug. There the elders of the two segments are obliged to assemble for sacrifice at certain times, notably at certain phases of the Festival cycle and when the funeral ceremonies or the investiture rites of a Gbizug tendaana are performed. The Gbizug tendaana and the Gbeog tendaana install each other in office. But the supreme Earth shrine at Gbizug is in the sole custody of the Gbizug tendaana. The people of Gbeog have their own focal *tɔŋgban*, the custody of which is vested in the Gbeog tendaana, and the people of Gbizug have no ritual connexion with this *tɔŋgban*. The Gbeogdem, again, also practise the cult of the External *Bɔyar* in the manner of the Hill clans. Gbizugdem have nothing to do with this cult. In fact they speak of it with contempt and hold aloof from it as if it were a perversion, even though their own clansmen practise it. 'Our ancestors did not take part in that', they say.

In terms of the Earth cult Gbeog comes into the field of ritual relations of Gbizug. Though it is the closest and most important, it is not the sole component segment of that field. Other adjacent maximal lineages form a part of it. Next to their supreme *tɔŋgban* the most sacred lineage shrine

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of the people of Gbizug is the grave of their primordial ancestor, Tɛndaan Gɛnɔt. This grave, situated on the reputed house-site of Tɛndaan Gɛnɔt, is in the sole custody of Gbizug, and is associated with the tɛndaanaship, therefore with the Earth cult. But whenever a new Gbizug tɛndaana is installed, representatives of Gbeog, Ba'at-Sakpar, and Zubiuŋ-Yakɔra must be present at the rites performed at Gɛnɔt's grave. This is a matter of right and duty, subsumed under the rights and duties of their clanship ties and validated by the myth of the primordial tɛndaanas. But one segment of Wakii must also be represented at these rites, not in virtue of clanship ties but of the kinship (*mabiirɔt*) in the figurative sense that is held to prevail between all tɛndaana clans. It is effective in this case because of the proximity and the ritual collaboration in the Great Festivals of Wakii and Gbizug.

It is significant that the people of Soog, despite their clanship ties with Gbizug, do not come into the field of its ritual relations. On the surface this appears to be correlated with their spatial separation from Gbizug. It is only by their attendance at the exoteric ceremonies that accompany the installation or funeral of a Gbizug tɛndaana, and by the rights to special portions of meat and beer that they can exercise on these occasions, that the clanship ties between Soog and Gbizug impinge on the latter's field of ritual relations.

On the other hand, the clanship ties of Soog with Gbeog have a ritual embodiment in the cult of the External *Bɔyar*. All the segments of Gbeog practise this cult; but some of them owe allegiance to the *Bɔyar* of which the people of Soog are the senior custodians, and the others have a separate *Bɔyar* of their own. Soog and Gbeog do not have a common Earth shrine. In terms of the Earth cult Gbeog forms one united community and Soog another.

In this intricate tissue of ritual relations we see again, as at Ba'ari, the interweaving of clanship ties, neighbourhood ties, and ties of ritual interdependence *per se*, forming syntheses of politico-ritual relations at a higher level than those that are possible in terms of any one of these categories. This interweaving can be seen at any of the ceremonies in which a particular field of ritual relations is actualized. It is particularly clear among the Tɛnzugu clans, where we can see, more plainly than at Gbizug or Ba'ari, how it is produced by the counterbalancing of ritual ties against clanship and local cleavages, and of ritual ties of one sort against those of another sort.

Soog has a specific ritual tie with one major segment of Sakpee, the head of which installs the senior ritual functionary of the Soog External *Bɔyar*. This segment of Sakpee, Sakpee I, has its own *Bɔyar*. But it unites with the other major segment, Sakpee II, in the worship of a common Earth shrine, the custody of which is vested in Sakpee II; and Sakpee II owes allegiance to the External *Bɔyar* Bona'ab, the senior custodian of which is the head of Kpata'ar. Soog, though linked by clanship ties with Kpata'ar, has no direct ritual connexions with it. Their fields of ritual relations overlap at Sakpee, which forms the bridge between them at this level.

Kpata'ar provides a typical instance of the structure of the ritual fields

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of any of the Hill Talis clans. Each of the two maximal lineages that constitute Kpata'ar, Kpata'arna'ab yiri and Nakyeet yiri, has its own private lineage *bɔyar*. Though bound by all the reciprocal duties and privileges that make them the closest clan *sunzɔp* of each other, the genealogical cleavage between them is somewhat more strongly emphasized than it is between the constituent maximal lineages of Zubiun, for example. The head of Kpata'arna'ab yiri is the head of the clan, and *eo ipso* the senior ritual functionary and principal custodian of the Bona'ab *Bɔyar*. The head of Nakyeet yiri has a complementary role in relation to him in political, ritual, and jural affairs that concern the whole clan.

The politico-ritual office held by the head of Kpata'arna'ab yiri is symbolized in a shrine that is ancillary to the External *Bɔyar*. It is in the sole custody of Kpata'arna'ab yiri. But when sacrifice is offered at it on prescribed occasions Nakyeet yiri must also be represented; and in addition Dakuor yiri, the component maximal lineage of Bunkiuk with which Kpata'arna'ab yiri has ties of clanship, must be represented and share in the sacrament. Thus, both Nakyeet yiri and Dakuor yiri, though they themselves have no ties of clanship, take part in a common sacrifice with Kpata'arna'ab yiri because of their clanship ties with the latter. In this case the central region of the field of clanship of Kpata'arna'ab yiri becomes actualized in a sacrament that symbolizes the exclusive rights to a particular politico-ritual office held by that maximal lineage.

But what about the worship of the External *Bɔyar*, Bona'ab? As its senior custodians, the men of Kpata'arna'ab yiri can sacrifice there alone or accompanied by Nakyeet yiri, if they desire the intercession of the *Bɔyar* in matters that concern them only. When the Great Festivals come round, however, it is obligatory for the whole congregation of the *Bɔyar* to join together in the performance of the ceremonies. The other communicants, beside the two segments of Kpata'ar, are Gundaat, Samiit and two of its linked lineages, together counting as a single unit, and Sakpee II.

The cult of the *Bɔyar* Bona'ab is the central force uniting this group of maximal lineages. It is, we must emphasize, not a permanent bond of union that operates at all times and under all conditions, but a synthesis that emerges chiefly in the context of the Great Festivals. During the festivals their interdependence in the cult of the *Bɔyar* imposes mutual amity and solidarity on this group of maximal lineages. At other times this is not always an effective sanction of amity and goodwill. For these ties of ritual collaboration are not homogeneous. Underneath them run other ties which reinforce them in the context of the *Bɔyar* cult but might act against them outside of this context. There are first the ties of clanship linking Kpata'arna'ab yiri with Nakyeet yiri, Nakyeet yiri with Sakpee, Sakpee with Gundaat, in a chain, as it were. Then there are the ties of clanship-by-courtesy which link all these lineages with one another. Samiit and Sakpee have bonds of local contiguity because they 'sit together on the same land' under the ritual jurisdiction of the Sakpee tendaana. Gundaat and Samiit are *sunzɔp*-by-courtesy, bound by a covenant of mutual amity which they trace back to the alleged kinship ties of their mythological founding ancestors. Gundaat and Kpata'ar

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182 have not only bonds of local contiguity, but an additional tie of ritual
X618 interdependence in that their heads install each other in their respective
● 769 ritual offices. Similarly, Sakpee and Samiit have an added ritual tie in that their heads each have a special role in the ceremonial installation of the other. Finally, the head of Samiit exercises a special politico-ritual function in relation to the head of Kpata'ar. It is his task, in times of great social emergency, formally to adjure the head of Kpata'ar to initiate the ritual procedures necessary to avert disaster.

Thus, underneath the general collaboration of the communicants of Bona'ab with one another in the *Bɔyar* cult, and interweaving with it, spread these particular, divergent ties between different pairs of maximal lineages. In many situations these subordinate ties hold fast where the superordinate ties of ritual collaboration between all the communicants are not strong enough to override the cleavages between them. It is a
[578] striking thing, for instance, that whereas Nakyeet yiri and Sakpee have tended to side with the Gɔlibdaana of Bunkiuk in the struggle for power that has been going on between him and the head of Kpata'ar during the last few years, Gundaat has stood staunchly by the latter. The general bond of ritual collaboration in the *Bɔyar* cult has not ensured the support of the whole Bona'ab congregation for Kpata'arna'ab yidem in this struggle, and even the specific ties of clanship between them and Nakyeet yidem have not been proof against the lure of the Gɔlibdaana's fleshpots.

It is characteristic of Tale society that the structure of a community, whether it be a permanent community or a temporary community such as emerges in the cult of the External *Bɔyar*, is directly mirrored in every situation and every institution in which this structure becomes manifest. To take a very simple example: when the congregation of Bona'ab assembles there for a sacrifice, the representatives of the different maximal lineages sit in a fixed order. Kpata'arna'ab yidem sit in the place of greatest honour, since they are the senior custodians, and the other lineages are distributed as shown in the diagram opposite. It will be seen that this diagram gives a picture also of the structural relations between the different lineages, and incidentally of their local relations to one another. It shows in a nutshell how local, structural, and politico-ritual relations are interlocked with one another and converge to create and maintain interclan co-operation and solidarity. The diagram shows also how the ritual roles in any of the rites and ceremonies connected with the worship at the *Bɔyar* are distributed amongst the different maximal lineages.

182 Kpata'arna'ab yidem are the senior custodians also of the supreme
X618 Earth shrine of Tɛnzugu, Doo; but in the cult of Doo they have a com-
794 pletely different set of ritual collaborators from those associated with
796 them in the cult of the External *Bɔyar*. They have a different field of ritual relations counterpoised to that of which the External *Bɔyar* is the focus. The units associated with Kpata'arna'ab yidem in the cult of Doo are Degal (linked by clanship ties to them, but having its own External *Bɔyar*), Gɔlibdaan yidem of Bunkiuk (who have no clanship ties with Kpata'arna'ab yidem, and are the senior custodians of a different External

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Bɔyar from theirs), and Tamboog (who also have no clanship ties with Kpata'ar, and have an independent External *Bɔyar*). These four units must be represented at all rites performed at Doo during the Great

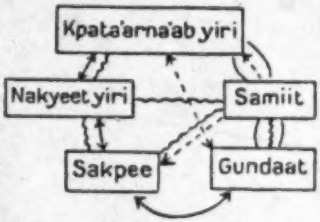

Diagram showing the seating arrangements at ceremonies in the sacred grove of the External Bɔyar BONA'AB, as reflecting the structural relations underlying ritual collaboration in the Bɔyar cult.

⟷ = Clanship ties
〰 = Ties of local contiguity
- - → = Specific ties of politico-ritual interdependence
⌒ = Other social ties.

Festivals. Each one has also a private Earth shrine, with which the other three groups have no connexion, but their common allegiance to Doo binds them to one another in mutual ritual dependence. This should mean also, and by all accounts formerly did mean, a bond of mutual amity and cohesion; for there is nothing, according to Tale belief, which the Earth abhors so greatly as strife between those who worship it together at the same shrine.

To-day the cult of Doo furnishes an outstanding instance of the relativity of such ritual sanctions to the structural relations of the corporate units amongst which they are effective. During the Great Festivals, the four maximal lineages meet as of old to perform the prescribed rites at Doo. For this limited period and this objective they are obliged to set aside their antagonisms and collaborate amicably. At other times, however, they are divided by the struggle for power that has been going on between the Gɔlibdaana and the Kpata'arna'ab. Both Degal (in spite of their clanship ties with Kpata'ar) and the majority of the Tamboog people have been seduced by the wealth and power of the Gɔlibdaana.

The pull of loyalty to Kpata'ar sustained by the common cult of Doo has not, however, remained altogether ineffective. In order to make their religious relations with Kpata'ar consistent with their newly arisen political hostility to them, the supporters of the Gɔlibdaana have tried to oust Kpata'arna'ab yidem from their traditional status in relation to Doo. They would thus, if they succeeded, have put Kpata'ar in the position of a faction opposed to the rightful principals in the cult of Doo.

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basis, for instance, of their technique of divination, which depends on rapid and spontaneous inference from stereotyped signs and symbols.

These myths provide yet another illustration of the indifference of the Tallensi to the origins of their customs. The emphasis in their culture is on conduct, not on creed; on performance rather than on doctrine. At the same time, these myths express, as we have previously noted, the basic postulate of Tale philosophy—that the ancestors are the *fons et origo* of their whole social order—and they show also how the natives visualize their totemic taboos as symbols of the moral and ritual bonds imposed by agnatic descent.

The Totemic Avoidances of the Talis as a Reflex of the Social Structure

We can now resume our analysis of the relationship of Talis ritual observances to the social structure. We have considered certain funeral rites and totemic avoidances as the chief indices of structural differentiation. We have seen that they are not, as the natives sometimes imply, hard-and-fast criteria. They mark off the Talis cluster from the Namoos in a broad way, but reflect the overlapping between them which our study of the clanship system has brought out. And among the Talis themselves, though there is a considerable congruence between genealogical grouping as determined by the canon of agnatic descent and distinctive ritual observances, it is not a one-to-one relationship.

The funeral customs and totemic taboos we have reviewed have one feature in common which helps to explain why the natives think of them as indices of social differentiation. They are tied to the agnatic line, passed on from father to child just like membership of the lineage. They owe their binding force to the fact that they were, according to native belief, instituted by the ancestors of the lineage or clan. Hence arises a significant common element, the oath associated with the observance. Breach of the ritual observance or using the oath falsely is blasphemy against the ancestors.

We pick up this thread again in another sphere of the ritual system of the Talis. It is a common opinion in Taleland that the taboos against eating the tortoise and water-tortoise are specially characteristic of the Hill Talis. And the reason always given for this is that these taboos are connected with the Talis cult of the External *Bɔyar*. Among the Hill Talis, if a child transgresses the taboo (*galəm kihər*) by eating of the forbidden animal, its father 'pays' (*yɔ*) a fowl to the External *Bɔyar* of which his clan is an adherent. The fowl is sacrificed at the *Bɔyar*, with apologies for the transgression and pleas for the child's future well-being. A fine is thus paid to annul the trespass, and the smallness of the fine is evidence that the trespass is not considered serious.

As a rule, the group of clans and maximal lineages forming the congregation of a particular External *Bɔyar* all have the same avoidances. Thus, all the units that owe ritual allegiance to Bona'ab, the External *Bɔyar* of Kpata'ar and its associated lineages, taboo the tortoise and the water-tortoise. Hence, individuals who are the spiritual wards of Bona'ab may not eat these animals, and, if they belong to other clans or other

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tribes with different taboos, they must observe these in addition to the taboos of their own clan. One segment of Samiit, which also belongs to this congregation, is prohibited in addition from eating the snake, so a supplicant coming to the *Bɔyar* sponsored by Samiit must refrain also from eating the snake. Wannii, another well-known External *Bɔyar* in the Hills, includes in its congregation only clans and lineages which taboo the snake and crocodile as well as the tortoise and water-tortoise. Hence, children of strangers who are the spiritual wards of this *Bɔyar* must avoid all four animals. Clans and lineages that have atypical totems also have independent External *Bɔya*.

Among the Hill Talis, then (and this applies also to the people of Zubiuŋ and Gbeog), common totems generally indicate membership of the same External *Bɔyar* congregation. This means that the clans and lineages concerned are subject to common ritual sanctions in terms of the ancestor cult, embodied in common cult objects and ceremonies. It implies obligatory bonds of amity and interdependence on the politico-ritual plane, prohibiting recourse to arms, for example, as a means of redressing wrongs between member lineages of the same congregation, or acts of hostility such as the abduction of a fellow member's wife, though he may not be a kinsman. It implies formal duties of member lineage to member lineage in funeral ceremonies; and it creates a feeling of belonging together, of spontaneous goodwill towards one another, among the member lineages, which even the bitter political dissensions of to-day have not altogether destroyed. Belonging to the same religious community in itself connotes social ties analogous to those of clanship.

The *Bɔyar* cult resembles other forms of ritual observance tied to the notion of descent in that there is an oath associated with it. It emphasizes the key idea of the cult, the dominance of the collective ancestors, as we shall see shortly. For that matter, this idea is the main theme of all the rites and doctrines of the cult—the initiation of youths by 'handing them over to their ancestors' as the Talis put it; the Harvest and Sowing Festivals; and no less in such minor things as entrusting a recalcitrant wife, the source of future descendants, to the *Bɔyar* or the coercion of an adulterous wife by means of it.

But before we deal with these points, an aspect of the *Bɔyar* cult to which we have previously referred must be further discussed. An External *Bɔyar* can become the spirit-guardian (*sɛyər*) of an individual. An ancestor spirit who becomes a person's spirit-guardian is defined in native religious doctrine as 'He who has my life in his keeping so that I exist (*ɔn m-mar n-ŋovor ka mbɛ*)', and the ward (*sɛyəraan*) must keep the totemic avoidances of the *Bɔyar* community. This applies particularly to non-Talis (Mamprusi, Dagomba, Bulisi, and others) who come as pilgrims to the *Bɔyar* to supplicate for children. The special bonds of ritual dependence thus created include both the parents and the children born, as the natives believe, in answer to their prayers. The Hill Talis themselves keep the avoidances whether or not they are personally the wards of the *Bɔyar*; for, as they put it, they are all *ipso facto* under its spiritual guardianship.

If a stranger pilgrim has a child in answer to his prayers, his first duty

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776 is to pay over the gifts and sacrifices he has promised the *Bɔyar* in return.
788 Later, when the child is old enough to travel, it is brought to the *Bɔyar* to be ritually dedicated to it and named, and thus brought into com-
[551] munion with it. Wards of the *Bɔyar* have prescribed names according to their order of birth. First-borns are always Tɔŋ or Bɔyare; later children have names compounded of these two names and suffixes indicative of
[582] sex or birth order—Tɔndoog or Tɔnpɔk or Tanzoo, and so forth. A girl ward must remain chaste until she marries; and when she is given in marriage she has to be released from this bond by means of gifts and sacrifices to the *Bɔyar* before she goes to her husband.

769 The ritual dominion of the Hill Talis' External *Bɔya* extends, also, to
648 whole clans and lineages of non-Tale tribes as we shall see later. Here
574 it is enough to mention that every External *Bɔyar* of the Hill Talis has a traditional network of client lineages and clans among the adjacent non-Tale tribes, the Mamprusi, Dagomba, Bulisi, Woolisi, and even Mossi; and nowadays also in Ashanti and the Colony. Every year, at the time of the Harvest Festivals, these client lineages send messengers with gifts and sacrifices to the *Bɔyar* to which they adhere, to give thanks for the benefits of the past year and to pray for good crops, good health, peace, and offspring during the coming year. Client lineages also observe the totemic and other ritual rules of the *Bɔyar*. From time to time reciprocal visits are paid to the client lineages by representatives of the Hill Talis
[609] lineages that sponsor them before the *Bɔyar*. These visitors, coming as emissaries of the *Bɔyar*, are received with the hospitality due to honoured kinsmen and travel long distances in hostile country under the safe conduct of their client associates without danger. It is chiefly from its client lineages that pilgrims come to a particular *Bɔyar*.

784 The personal totemic avoidances of wards of a Talis *Bɔyar* are instances
776 of a more general rule. It often happens that a child's spirit-guardian is a
184 matrilateral ancestor or ancestress, its father's maternal grandfather, for instance. Then the ward (*sɛyəraan*) is obliged to observe the totemic avoidances which were held by his spirit-guardian during the latter's lifetime. He must do so, according to native doctrine, because he will have to offer sacrifices throughout his lifetime to his spirit-guardian; and as a sacrifice is an act of communion, both between the living, and between the living and the dead, he would be unable either to offer or to partake of sacrifices to his spirit-guardian if he did not keep the latter's taboos. Thus he would nullify the bond of mystical tutelage and lay himself open to inevitable disasters. He would also gravely damage his relations with the agnatic descendants of his spirit-guardian, upon whom falls the duty of maintaining the cult of the latter's spirit and whom he will sometimes have to join in sacrifice. There are many people among the Namoos who observe Talis taboos for this reason, and many Talis who avoid both the totems of their own clan and those of other clans as well. The fowl taboo of the Namoos is an exception to this rule, for the obvious reason that it is restricted to first-born children. Even if a man had to avoid the fowl in his lifetime, it ceases to be relevant after his death, and is no longer remembered by his descendants. But the rule does apply to the ancillary totems of those Namoo clans and lineages that have ar[illegible], such as the

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leopard taboo of Dkoog; for these taboos are of the same class as those of the Talis.

An individual's avoidance of his matrilateral spirit-guardian's totems is, of course, an avoidance of the totems of the latter's lineage. They are the people who have the custody of the shrine at which sacrifices must be offered to the *sɛyər* spirit; their mediation is essential for a correct relationship between ward and spirit-guardian. It is with them, the living members of the spirit-guardian's lineage, that the ward shares the communion of sacrifice, and this is the fundamental condition for preserving the mystical goodwill of the *sɛyər*. On the same principle, a person given as ward to a Talis *Bɔyar* would be precluded from sacrificing to the *sɛyər*, that is from sharing in the communion of sacrifice with the members of the *Bɔyar* congregation through whom alone ritual access can be gained to the *Bɔyar*, if he does not observe their totemic avoidances. This is the symbol of the unique religious and moral bond between them. There are other ways, too, in which a matrilateral ancestor can be endowed with direct and permanent ritual efficacy for a man. Such a spirit may become (*naam*) his divining spirit (*bakologo*) or his Destiny (*yin*). Then he will have to call upon this ancestor's agnatic descendants to come and consecrate a shrine to the spirit at his house. He will have to sacrifice to this spirit and share the communion of sacrifice with the spirit's agnatic descendants. Therefore, he, too, must respect the totems of this matrilateral ancestor's lineage.

We see, therefore, that an individual can have private totemic observances not shared by other members of his lineage or clan. Like clan totems, however, they become obligatory on him in virtue of a particular tie of descent. Superficially, they can be understood as emblems of this tie and of the living kinship ties that flow from it. But there is more to it than this, as we see from the totemic bond between stranger wards of an External *Bɔyar* and the *Bɔyar* congregation.

The stranger ward and his parents are not kinsmen of the lineage that sponsors them. But they do acquire a relationship of what might be called quasi-kinship with their sponsors and a ritual bond with the *Bɔyar* which carries social duties and religious obligations equivalent to those of adherents by descent of the *Bɔyar*. These relationships are based on the fact that stranger pilgrims establish a line of descent through the mystical aid of the *Bɔyar*. It is, as the natives put it, 'because it is on his (the *Bɔyar's*) account that we have begotten children'.

Similarly, the association of totemic and other ritual observances with lineage and clanship groupings is seen to have a wider significance when the client lineages of Hill Talis *Bɔya* are brought into the picture. The ties between client lineages and the true member lineages of the *Bɔyar* to which they owe ritual allegiance may be called quasi-clanship, to sum up the native interpretation of the relationship in one word.

Totemic Taboos and the Patrilineal Principle

We have endeavoured to keep the information adduced in the preceding pages down to the minimum necessary for our argument. It is enough, however, to justify the conclusion that the ritual observances we have

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other lineages. Though the norms of clanship and the social bonds that define the clan are an extension of those that hold within the lineage, they mark out a wider field of social relations for the individual. It is through his clanship ties that the individual gets bound up with the social order as a whole; through them he becomes a member of the wider community of the Hill Talis, which in turn forms part of the yet wider and looser community, the Tallensi in general. Through clan membership one belongs to a community, defined not by specific rights and duties based on the spiritual jurisdiction of one's own ancestors, but principally by common values and common ritual interests. Within the lineage the social personality of the individual is an important factor of his behaviour and of the behaviour of others towards him. Sex, age, and status are significant. In relations between lineages the social personality of the individual fades into the background. It is submerged in the corporate unity of the lineage.

Totems, Clanship, and External Bɔɣar

The social bonds of clanship, like those of the lineage, derive their validity from the ancestors. But it is now not a question of a particular known line of ancestry, but of the ancestors in general; and among the Hill Talis these are associated with the External *Bɔɣar*.

The External *Bɔɣar* is an elaboration of the lineage *bɔɣar*, parallel to the elaboration of the lineage structure into the structure of the clan and the network of clanship. It is the seat of all the ancestors of the clans and lineages that make up its congregation. As we have previously learnt, each External *Bɔɣar* is the pivot of a group of structurally connected clans and lineages, and at the same time the local embodiment of a single cult embracing all the Hill Talis. Thus the cult of the External *Bɔɣar* maintains ritually sanctioned social bonds between a particular group of maximal lineages, and at the same time symbolizes the fundamental common values of all the Hill Talis. It is the quintessence of the social identity of the Hill Talis. Hence, they say that when a boy has been initiated into this cult, 'he at length knows (what it means to be) a Talaŋ (*u pana baŋ Talaŋ*)'. The esoteric significance of the fact of being a Talaŋ has been revealed to the boy. Before that he was a 'woman', a 'child'; now 'he has become an elder'. These terms are used metaphorically to indicate the boy's transformation from a person who was merely a member of the lineage by birth into a full social member of the clan and the wider community.

The *Bɔɣar* is the apex of the whole ancestor cult of the Talis. It symbolizes the idea of the ancestors in general, the concept of ancestry, one might say, in contrast to the notion of a particular named line of ancestors. Thus, the Hill Talis speak of the External *Bɔɣar*, and often invoke it in ritual, as *Yaab*, Ancestor, that is, the generic, prototypical, anonymous ancestor. The External *Bɔɣar* symbolizes the ritual value of the Ancestors to all the Talis. It implies the subjection of all the Talis to a common spiritual jurisdiction, deriving from the Ancestors. It symbolizes the continuity of the whole social order conceived as brought into being by the Ancestors, and kept in being under their spiritual

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aegis. Initiation into the *Bɔyar* cult binds the individual by the most solemn covenant known to the natives to uphold the social order bequeathed to the living by the Ancestors; and this is a bond that transcends the lineage. It requires the interests of the lineage to be subordinated to those of the wider community in particular circumstances.

That this is so can be seen from the fact that the most solemn oath of the Hill Talis is the oath by the External *Bɔyar*—'(By) my Ancestor Tɔŋna'ab and his late-millet flour water (*Nyaab Tɔŋna'ab ni u za zɔm kuom*)'. It is strictly forbidden to use late-millet flour in sacrifices at the External *Bɔyar*. The climax of the initiation ceremony is the administration of this oath to the novices at the *Bɔyar*, pledging them, in the name of a thing sternly excluded from its rites, to observe the tenets of the cult and keep the secret of its rites. This oath, in contrast to the oath by the totem animal, is a matter of the utmost gravity. 'If we swear thus', an elder of one of the Hill clans explained to me in tones of obvious awe, 'we all who are Talɔŋ, you know we are speaking the truth. If you swear thus and lie you will die.' It is an oath which would be resorted to only in an extremely serious matter; and its gravity for the Hill Talis is known all over Taleland.

The sanction of the oath is the covenant entered into by a man when he is initiated. The *Bɔyar* destroys a perjurer. 'Will you not be going into the *Bɔyar* to sacrifice, and eat of the (sacrificial) flour and (sacrificial) fowl? This is what kills you (if you swear falsely)', a ritual functionary of the cult declared. It is not even a question of literal participation in the ritual of worship at the *Bɔyar*. A man who has offended it cannot offer sacrifice to his own dead father at his own home; for his father had, in his lifetime, taken part in the sacraments of the cult, and was joined to all the ancestors, whose common shrine is the *Bɔyar*, on his death. By the same reasoning even uninitiated members of clans that belong to a *Bɔyar* congregation can validly use the oath, though they would be unlikely to do so. For they are also 'the children of the *Bɔyar*'; their life, too, is 'in the keeping' of the ancestors who abide there. They will become initiated members of the cult if they are men, and they are members of the lineages incorporated into the cult if they are women.

When Hill Talis are asked how their totemic taboos are connected with the cult of the External *Bɔyar*, they say 'they belong together (*ba tɔŋa taaba*)'. The phrase implies that the two things are different but intrinsically related. In fact, the Hill Talis think of all their ritual institutions as being somehow connected with the *Bɔyar* cult. For behind all of them stands the sanction of the ancestor spirits. Totemic taboos hold independently of the *Bɔyar* cult. Breach of them, or a false oath by the totem animals, does not provoke the wrath of the *Bɔyar*. Fines are paid to the *Bɔyar* for a breach of totemic taboos because it is the supreme manifestation of the ancestors. If a person transgresses an obligation that falls on him by virtue of his descent, it is obviously necessary to appease the ancestors. On the same principle, the Hill Talis hale an adulterous wife to the External *Bɔyar* in order to force her to confess; for her sin endangers the life of her husband and children and thus jeopardizes their line of descent. This is a matter of concern to the ancestors, not only

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and her sons might have been able to exercise all the rights and duties of clanship. There is, in fact, a submerged feeling of rivalry in the relations between the men of the clan and the *pɔyayabəlis*, deprived by an accident of birth of effective jural and ritual membership of the clan. This is shown, for example, in a curious taboo affecting the oldest living *pɔyayabəlag* of a maximal lineage. She may never spend a night in the homestead of the head of the maximal lineage, even if he is her own brother. If she did, either or both of them would die. For the lineage ancestors abide in this homestead, and they object to her presence there simultaneously with that of their proper male custodian. The natives, of course, simply state this taboo as a fact, but to anyone familiar with Tale culture the interpretation is obvious. The senior *pɔyayabəlag* might, in her own person, have been the head of the lineage but for the accident of birth. Her presence in the homestead which she might have occupied as a man is a hidden challenge and reproach both to the male head of the lineage and to the ancestors. It would be tantamount to a symbolic rejection of the fundamental principles of the lineage organization. For these reasons she cannot stay with the man who most conspicuously represents the extrusion of women from the full heritage of patrilineal descent.

Institutionalized Recognition of a Clanswoman's Status

There are many institutions in which the status of the *pɔyayabəlag* as an intrinsic element in the lineage organization is recognized. For example, a new-born child is confined to its father's house for some months. When it is big enough to be allowed out of doors it must be ritually taken out for the first time by a *pɔyayabəlag* of the clan. Usually she is a near agnate of the father, but any clanswoman may be asked to carry out the rite. The child's father consults a diviner to find out who will be a suitable *pɔyayabəlag*; for the rite is implicitly a blessing of the ancestors, and it is they who are believed to appoint a woman of the clan to carry their blessing to the child. It can be surmised that a *pɔyayabəlag* is chosen for this rite because she is by birth identified with the child's father and its lineage, and by sex identified with the child's mother and the function of motherhood. Taking the child out of the house is in part a question of maternal care, therefore a woman's task; it is also a step that involves the child's physical and spiritual well-being. Outside the walls of the homestead lie greater dangers, both material and mystical, than inside the homestead, and this is the concern of the child's patrilineal ancestors.

The role of *pɔyayabəlis* in relation to the lineage *bɔyar* is significant in this connexion. A woman cannot become the custodian of an ancestor shrine, except nominally if she is the sole survivor of a lineage. In that case she cannot sacrifice to the shrine directly, but must call in a collateral male agnate to deputize for the man who might have been the custodian of the shrine. This is the most important distinction between the status of male members and that of female members of the lineage, and it is a consequence of the fact that women do not help to maintain the continuity of the lineage. Nevertheless, *pɔyayabəlis* have the right to take part

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562 in sacrifices to their lineage ancestors. When an important sacrifice is
793 due to be made to a lineage *bɔyar*, the married *pɔyayabəlis* of the lineage
769 who live near enough to be able to attend, and especially the senior *pɔyayabələg*, must be informed. Those who can, will attend the rite, and a prescribed portion (*tɔrəg*) of the animal sacrificed is the due of the *pɔyayabəlis*. This portion, consisting of the 'waist' (*sie*), i.e. part of the vertebral column and some of the ribs, together with prescribed bits of various internal organs and the intestines, is divided among the *pɔyayabəlis*, both married and unmarried, who are present. The allocation of a prescribed portion of a sacrificial animal to any group or individual is the most significant indication, in Tale culture, that that group or individual has a recognized formal status in the social structure.

428 An outstanding event in the life of a lineage is the inheritance (*vaagər*),
613 that is, the formal assumption of the custody, of a lineage *bɔyar* by a new
796 lineage head. Being old men generally, lineage heads seldom survive succession to this status for many years. Thus, the inheritance of a lineage *bɔyar* is an event of fairly frequent recurrence at periods varying
[182] from five to ten years. It is an occasion on which the integration of the lineage is at its maximum. Every member, male and female, who can do so makes an effort to attend. Those who are heads of families contribute fowls and flour to be added to the sacrifices on their behalf. All cognates by descent through women of the lineage who live near enough are invited, and those who are heads of families also bring contributions for the sacrifice. In short, the occasion is a sacrament in which all the descendants of the lineage ancestors, through both men and women, participate, and it is regarded as a particularly auspicious sacrament.

613 One of the first rites in the inheritance of a lineage *bɔyar* is the transfer
796 of the shrine from the homestead of its late custodian to that of his succes-
[787] sor. This rite is carried out by one male member of the lineage, almost invariably a member of the segment whose head has become head of the
562 lineage, and one *pɔyayabələg* of the lineage, both selected by divination. Later, when many fowls brought by those present are sacrificed to the *bɔyar* to mark its transfer to a new lineage head, this pair are the first of the lineage members to present their offerings. Thus is symbolized the equality of status of men and women members of the lineage before the *bɔyar*, and the rights of women members and their descendants to the spiritual protection of the lineage ancestors.

604 As we have seen in our consideration of attached lineages, and as
x 618 we shall learn more fully when we examine the relations of maternal
587 uncle and sororal nephew,[1] there are circumstances in which descent through a woman is partially assimilated to the true agnatic line. To give only one example here, a sororal nephew (*ahəŋ*) of any degree whatsoever, that is, any member of another clan who has a cognatic link with the clan in question through an ancestress however remote, is formally equated with the sons of the clan in the matter of leviratic rights. An *ahəŋ* has the right to seek the hand of a widow of his maternal uncle's clan (*ahəb yiri*) on the same terms as a true member of that clan. He is, so to speak, exercising the right, corollary to the obligation of clan exogamy, that

[1] In *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi.*

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or personal mishaps. They do not attempt to control nature by means of ritual, though the content of their prayers might persuade the superficial observer that this is their object. Their ritual is concerned with the effects of natural phenomena and physiological happenings on the fate of the individual and the coherence of the community. Ritual is the means of fortifying the individual and the society against these effects. Tallensi believe that the fate of individuals and of communities depends on their relationships with mystical powers. Natural phenomena are the medium, as it were, by means of which these powers intervene in human affairs. If men offend them, they will intervene disastrously; if men please them, they will intervene beneficently. And men offend or please the mystical powers by the manner in which they behave to one another and by the way in which they observe the moral norms of the society and the ritual duties that symbolize these norms. Ritual—that is, sacrifice and prayer—is a means of keeping up a good relationship with the mystical powers. These, as we know, are principally the ancestors and the Earth.

Striving after Security: the Ritual Background

We have tried to state briefly how the Tallensi connect their ritual conceptions with their striving after personal prosperity and social security. This can be put in another way. The individual farmer, working his own land with the aid of his dependants for their common subsistence, looks to his and their immediate ancestors for spiritual protection. He and his dependants are personally responsible for the success of their efforts in the working of their fields. They are also personally responsible for the goodwill of their immediate ancestors. The sacrifices and prayers they offer to their ancestors at sowing and harvest express these private concerns. They enable them to enjoy the fruits of their labour with a clear conscience and to overcome the demoralizing effect of accidents, which they regard as private misfortunes.

On the other hand, public calamities are associated with the mystical powers of the Earth, which are a symbolical projection of the common concerns of mankind. By prayers and sacrifices the ritual officers who represent the community in relation to the Earth and the Earth in relation to the community, the tendaanas, preserve the benevolence of the Earth towards mankind. Even though ritual measures often and obviously fail to prevent a public calamity, they serve to reintegrate the community after the calamity has passed. The idea of the Earth's being concerned with the common good corresponds to the fact that the cultivations of individuals are but parcels of land cut from the limitless earth.

Just as the earth's surface is limitless, so the mystical power of the Earth is universal.[1] All men everywhere acknowledge this in the ritual observances by which they show their respect for the Earth. The most important of these observances are the rules concerning 'things found on

[1] The word *tɛŋ* belongs to the *ka—si* Noun Class and takes the third person singular pronoun *ka*. This is the pronoun always used to refer to the earth in its material aspect. But in its mystical aspect the Earth is commonly referred to by the third person singular pronoun *u* which is primarily used for persons. To conform with this rule, we write 'earth' in the first sense with a lower-case initial letter, and 'Earth' with a capital letter for the latter.

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where it always and necessarily brings together men of the same descent group, bound together not only by ties of blood but also by ties of residence, common interests, and common experience. The local concentration of the lineage in such close association with the graves of its ancestors and the land hallowed by their life and labour gives to the cult of the ancestors a binding power and directive force in the social life of the natives which is hardly equalled elsewhere in Africa. The like-mindedness, common values, mutual loyalties, sense of unity and continuity, so prominent in a lineage of small span and distinctive only to a lesser degree of lineages of greater span, can be translated directly into terms of contact, co-operation, and experience. So also the conflicts and rivalries that inevitably spring up in a human community, and occur as often in a Tale settlement as anywhere else in the world, have an additional significance, since they necessarily involve men who are kin to one another and belong to the same corporate unit. The principle of lineage representation and the concept of the equivalence of members of the same lineage have the maximum efficacy in these conditions.

The effect of the congruence between lineage ties and local ties is of no less importance for a woman than for a man. In childhood her closest playmates are the children of her father's inner lineage, that is, the children of her father's nearest neighbours, and their principal playground is the immediate vicinity of their parents' homesteads. Among her classificatory patrilineal relatives she knows best and depends most on the members of her father's inner lineage. Members of her father's medial lineage are next in order of importance for her, and more distant clansmen and clanswomen least important, though far from irrelevant. When she marries into another community she does not cease to belong to her natal clan. She maintains close ties with it, the most intimate being with the members of her father's inner lineage; and she thinks of these ties as ties with a corporate social unit, not with particular individuals only. Both to herself, her husband and his clansmen, and to her children, her 'father's house' (*ba yir*) is, in the broadest sense, her natal clan pictured as a local community, in a narrower sense, her father's medial lineage, thought of as a localized subdivision of her natal clan, in the narrowest sense her father's inner lineage thought of in the same way.

In her husband's home, too, the correlation of lineage proximity with local proximity enters continuously into the routine of her life. Her relations with the members of her husband's clan are graded in accordance with their lineage proximity to him. The men of her husband's clan with whom she has closest contact are her husband's nearest agnates and the nearest neighbours of her conjugal family. With him they form the segment of his clan which has the greatest jural interest in her and her children. If her husband dies, it is one of these men who is most likely to inherit her. The wives of all her husband's clansmen are nominally her co-wives or daughters-in-law; but in fact it is only the wives of his close agnates, women who are her nearest neighbours, whom she regards as effective classificatory co-wives and daughters-in-law. She and they will help one another in such tasks as floor beating or ceremonial cooking, and at critical times like a confinement or a death. She has bonds of

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778 The graves of Sɛɣahəg and Bəɣada lie within a couple of minutes' walk
●769 of each other and of Mosuor's baobab in Puhug. Though Bəɣada's grave is in the middle of the home farm of a Puhug man, its custody is vested in Kuorəg, whose head comes to sacrifice there periodically. Similarly Siiyɛŋ, Kəbər, and Bəɣayiedət, the ancestors of Guŋ and Dekpieŋ, lie buried at Guŋ proper, at the *daboog* of this *yizug*, though the majority of their descendants live at Dekpieŋ.

173 For the people of Tongo—and this also applies to all Tallensi except
764 the Hill Talis—the disposition of graves maps out the gradual increase or diminution in numbers of the clan or any segment of the clan through the generations, and its gradual territorial expansion or retraction. Thus Tɛndaan Gɛnət's house site and grave in the centre of Puhug are accepted as proof that the Gbizugdɛm lived there at the time of Mosuor's arrival and were gradually pushed out to their present location by the spreading of Mosuor's progeny. The founding ancestor of Zubiuŋ Yakəradɛm, Gɛnət's putative brother, is also believed to have lived at Puhug at that remote period, and they, too, are said to have been dispossessed by Mosuor biis. Similarly the location of Bəɣada's grave is proof to the natives that the growing numbers of Puhugdɛm caused his descendants to withdraw gradually into what is now Kuorəg.

Structure of the Clan Settlement among non-Namoos

613 Among Talis as well as Namoos in the older part of Taleland, the clan
621 settlement is built up round the lineage in this way. In composite clans
764 the tendency is always for each constituent maximal lineage to form a locally distinct though not strictly demarcated aggregate, and for the segments of these *yizugət* to follow the same rule more markedly. The correlation of residence with lineage, ancestral lands, and the graves of the ancestors holds. At Zubiuŋ, at Ba'ari, and among the non-Namoo clans living in the vicinity of Yaməlag and Sie—the group of clans which the Hill Talis regard as having been culturally influenced by the Namoos—a person is buried among his own (or her husband's) immediate forebears near the homestead. The Hill Talis bury their dead in small cemeteries, each section (*yizug*) or main segment (*dug*) of a section usually
[184 having its own. Among all the Talis and the non-Namoos of the Sie
778] district a sacred grove (*tɔŋgban*) or an External *Bəɣar* takes the place of the sacred dancing-ground at Tongo as the local and spiritual focus of the settlement. The homestead of the *yizug* head, housing the most important shrines of its ancestors, whatever his ritual office may be, is often fixed, so that when a man succeeds to the office he takes possession also of the homestead that goes with it; thus the idea of the home of the maximal lineage has an everlasting and consecrated embodiment in the actual homestead occupied by its head.

184 Among the clans which have tɛndaanas the local anchorage of the
793 clan and of its constituent maximal lineages is, in some respects, even
621 stronger than among the Namoos. It is more conspicuously wrought into their institutions and more obviously sacrosanct, since the office of tɛndaana presupposes very special ritual bonds, the strongest bonds known to the Tallensi, of a maximal lineage with locality.

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of Tɔŋ-Kuorəg. The practical duties of his office were carried out by his sons and other elders of the section. The decrepitude of age does not make a chief or tɛndaana any the less a chief or tɛndaana. The activities of the office are simply taken over by his sons.

Tallensi never undertake anything of importance,—for instance, a marriage transaction or the building of a new shrine or making a new bush farm—without the knowledge of the other members of the medial lineage and without consulting or at least informing the head of their section or maximal lineage. The home of the lineage head is the centre of the social life of the lineage members and their families. There is a constant coming and going of members of the lineage at the lineage head's homestead. There they often congregate in the dry season to gossip or discuss their affairs under his shade tree. Visiting kinsmen and affines of lineage members from other clans usually call to greet him there. This applies especially to the medial lineage but also to maximal lineages and sections in a slightly lesser degree. The lineage head himself, if he is able-bodied, often goes to see other members of the lineage. The bonds of solidarity, mutual interest, and knowledge of one another's affairs are thus constantly being knit together within the lineage.

Though a lineage head has no judicial authority, he is often asked to arbitrate in disputes or conflicts between segments of the lineage. What he generally tries to do is to bring about a compromise and reconciliation, for he has no powers of enforcing his decision. When he is successful in adjusting differences, it is on account of his prestige and because he has the public opinion of the lineage on his side. No lineage head would attempt to adjust a dispute in the lineage without the advice and backing of the other elders of the lineage.

The sanction of a lineage head's position is the ancestor cult. Even a chief has, in the native social order, no judicial or economic sanctions to support his authority. A tɛndaana has, in addition, the sanction of the Earth. The role of the lineage head in corporate affairs, his duties, responsibilities, and privileges all arise from the fact that he has custody of the lineage *bɔyar*. The strength of this sanction depends not only on the natives' belief in the mystical powers of the ancestors but also on the crucial function of the ancestor cult as the ideology around which lineage relations are organized. The cult of the lineage ancestors is the supreme centripetal force in lineage relations. Many men live far away from their lineage homes. They maintain their lineage bonds on account of their dependence on the ancestor cult. Individuals may transgress the norms of lineage unity and amity with apparent impunity. Their death, when it comes, is conceptualized as a punishment from the ancestors and this serves to reaffirm the norms of lineage solidarity.

Because of this, sacrifices to the lineage *bɔyar* form the key mechanism for maintaining lineage cohesion and affirming the status of the lineage head. The first of these sacrifices made by a new lineage head (in a lineage of a high order) when he formally takes over the custody of the *bɔyar* is of outstanding significance. Not less than three or four and sometimes ten to fifteen years elapse between successive ceremonies of this sort. They are occasions of special solemnity marking the re-establishment of

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613 the proper structural form of the lineage around a new lineage head after
769 its temporary disturbance by the death of his predecessor. Not only do
182 all the adult members of the lineage attend, each bearing a fowl to be
782 sacrificed on behalf of himself and his segment, but representatives of other branches of the clan and very many extra-clan kin, descendants of daughters of the lineage, also attend. The pattern of the rites is the same as that of any sacrifice to the *bɔyar*, but all who participate feel them to be a specially binding sacrament. An atmosphere of great goodwill and fellowship prevails, particularly during the festive episodes of sharing out the meat and the beer.

613 In addition, the funeral of a lineage head is an event that mobilizes
764 the entire lineage structure and demonstrates the power of the religious
182 sanctions as the bulwark of his position. Special rites are performed, in many clans, to detach his social personality from the lineage shrines. And it is often in the divination sessions at the funerals of lineage heads that suppressed intra-lineage conflicts are brought into the open. The religious sanctions against intra-lineage conflict are thus set in motion and reconciliations brought about.

613 A mere catalogue of the chief privileges and responsibilities of the head of lineage of a high order is sufficient to indicate his social role as chief representative of the lineage in relation to other lineages and to the ancestors. No ceremonial or jural transaction in which the lineage is concerned as a whole can take place without the presence of the lineage head or his deputy. When the carcass of an animal slaughtered for ritual or ceremonial purposes is divided up, the best part of the portion allotted to a particular lineage is reserved for the *kpeem*. When a member of the [224] lineage kills an animal in the hunt, one hind leg and sometimes the skin are the perquisites of the lineage head (of the medial or maximal lineage), and the skull and horns are deposited with him. In these and similar situations the *kpeem's* privileges are regarded as a means of apprising the [769] ancestors of the event and winning their blessings. The meat he gets, for instance, is 'set out for the ancestor spirits (*zien kpiim*)' before it is consumed.

613 Certain sacrifices to the lineage ancestors are obligatory on every man
782 of advanced years. They are both a sign of gratitude to the ancestors
769 and a symbol of the common interest of the whole lineage in the giver's welfare and possessions. Thus a man must sacrifice one of the cows he receives for his eldest daughter's bride-price to the lineage *bɔyar* of his medial lineage; and the lineage head receives a hind leg and the skin as well as other parts of the animal. Similarly if a man wishes to set up a new ancestor shrine he must first inform his lineage ancestors by means of a sacrifice to the *bɔyar*. Hence Tallensi say that one of the advantages of being the head of a medial or maximal lineage is that there is always meat in the house. But this privilege, they add, is a compensation for the responsibilities of lineage headship. Not the least of these is the *kpeem's* duty to make frequent sacrifices to the ancestors in order to preserve their goodwill towards the lineage.

613 All interlineage jural and ritual transactions take place formally
578 through the lineage heads. Thus if a man seduces the wife of a member
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feeling of politico-ritual difference between them. It is the same within each cluster. The elders inaugurate the Festival season with many sacrifices asking the ancestors and the Earth to prevent fighting from breaking out between the young men, in spite of the truce, and they always depute a number of reliable young men to keep a good look-out during the dances lest unruly spirits stir up trouble. Thus the greater solidarity is built up on the lesser solidarities; and this principle applies throughout the social system.

The rhythm of Tale social life is contained within an annual cycle. It swings between two poles. For most of the year the sectional interests of lineage and clan dominate the pattern of collective life. But for one month the greater solidarity of the whole society prevails.

In relation to the mechanisms of unity and equilibrium Tale warfare appears as a negative sanction that reinforces their effects. It was the obverse of these mechanisms, the polar opposite of the idea of unity, arising out of the very same balance of social forces that makes that unity possible. Both in time and at a given time the equilibrium of Tale political life swung (and still swings) between two poles: on the one hand, the extraordinarily consistent and precise differentiation of social segments; on the other, the strong sense of unity created by the religious bonds of the society.

War or, more often, the threat of war was the most drastic means of bringing to a head and working off the frictions that inevitably arose from the action of the principle of social differentiation of corporate units; its effect, however, was to bring the opposite principle into action, and thus it served to strengthen the forces of social cohesion in the society at large.

Equilibrium and Solidarity within the Clan and Lineage

The pattern of solidarity we have been discussing applies at all levels of Tale social structure. Tensions similar to those we have discerned in the corporate relations between clans underlie corporate relations within clans and maximal lineages. Centrifugal tendencies and centripetal tendencies pull against one another. Conflicts within corporate units tend to follow the lines of lineage and local segmentation. They take the form of opposition between the solidarity of the segment and the wider solidarity of the lineage or clan. And the greater the relative autonomy of the segment, the deeper does the conflict tend to be. Hence conflicts in a composite clan tend to go deeper than conflicts in a genealogically unitary group such as a sub-clan of Mosuor biis. But, as in the social structure at large, the bonds of common interest, of mutual dependence in ritual and secular matters, and of local unity tend to prevail in the long run. However deep a breach may be, the dissidents never repudiate membership of the larger unit, for this would be tantamount to repudiating the ancestors. The ancestor cult is the supreme sanction of lineage and clan solidarity. Thus, at the best, conflicts are resolved by the eventual restoration of the *status quo ante*. At the worst, a new balance is struck between the centrifugal tendencies of lineage segmentation and the centripetal emphasis of the lineage structure as a whole backed by the ancestor cult. It is in this way that the structure of a lineage or clan is

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adapted by stages to changes in its internal composition due to the passage of time or the cumulative effects of social and economic pressure, without bursting its form.

Solidarity within the clan or the lineage is governed by the field principle. It is a function of the situation; and it is a function, also, of the segmentary relationship of each unit involved to other like units, to more inclusive units, and to the whole social structure. The complex of thought, feeling, action, and expression we designate as the sentiment of solidarity is evoked in different degrees in accordance with the sector of the social structure engaged. It reflects the range of common interests evoked in the situation and the strength of the common values.

Within the clan, or any segment of it, the sentiment of solidarity is a constant motive of conduct and a regular criterion by which the individual evaluates the behaviour of others. We have seen how it grows out of the lifelong association of lineage kin in daily life. Hence a Talən identifies himself by reference to his clan settlement and the segment of his clan to which he belongs. He speaks of his clansmen as 'our folk (*ti yidem*)' and of their wives and children as 'our wives (*ti pɔyaba*)' and 'our children (*ti biis*)'. In the old days of warfare, as in market brawls or hunting expeditions to-day, a Talən never stops to question the rights or wrongs of an argument in which a clansman of his is involved with a non-clansman, or a close agnate with a distant agnate. He immediately takes his clansman's or close agnate's part.

The unity of a clan or a lineage is not only a vital fact of experience for its members but the principal concept by which other corporate groups define it in jural, political, and ritual relations. Thus in the old days a creditor could raid the live-stock of any clansman of his debtor, but not those of a neighbour of his debtor who belonged to a different clan. In the latter case a reprisal raid was the penalty. In the former case the victim of the raid could demand restitution from his clansman, the original debtor; and I know of men who pawned a child or sold him into slavery in order to find the means of repaying a clansman who had been raided, rather than let the affair become a source of conflict in the clan. This is a good illustration, incidentally, of the statement previously made that collective responsibility is not a principle of Tale jural relations. It is not the clan but the debtor himself who is responsible for his debt. Self-help is a technique for putting pressure on a debtor through the mechanisms of clan and lineage cohesion.

The same principle appears in the abduction of wives of distant unrelated clans. Thus Pal of Zubiuŋ abducted the wife of a Yinduuri man. He claimed that this was merely 'cancelling a debt (*lɛrəg samər*)'. Some years earlier a distant clansman of the Yinduuri man had abducted the wife of one of Pal's clansmen and this 'debt' had now been cancelled. The point is, not that all Yinduuri was held responsible for the original wrong, but that every wife is a gain to the clan as a whole and the loss of a wife is a loss to the clan as a whole. If a clan wishes to avoid reprisals such as those taken by Pal, men of the clan must not countenance the abduction of wives by any of their fellows. It is like the avenging of a clansman's death at the hands of men of another clan in the old days.

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of the clan. They regularly attend sacrifices and ceremonies at Gbizug as their forefathers did, and continue to perform the duties and accept the privileges of close *sunzop* of Gbizug. But they are uneasy, the more so as the Gbizug tendaana never loses an opportunity of haranguing them, at ceremonies, about the disgraceful conduct of their tendaana. For a short while the inescapable demands of ritual collaboration brought the two tendaanas together again, when the Gbeog tendaana had to perform the principal rites at the installation of the new Gbizug tendaana. But soon afterwards their dispute revived again. It is, as elders of related clans declared, an insoluble dispute. Both tendaanas are right, they say. The Gbizug tendaana is going by 'what used to be (*den daa a siem*)', the Gbeog tendaana by 'what is now (*den a siem zinala*)'. It is a problem of adjusting the equilibrium of the clan to changes in the segmentary relationship of its component lineages. One day, it is said, there will be a Gbizug tendaana who will accept the present position. Then the two tendaanas will become reconciled and the quarrel will cease.

As this story shows, intra-clan conflicts dislocate the routine of co-operation and reciprocity and lead to anomalies in customary modes of conduct. Yinyela's refusal to co-operate in the affairs of Ten-Puhug led to many embarrassing situations; as when two men who were not members of Yinyela's segment came to assist his (classificatory) grandson with his house-building, in accordance with normal custom, and were publicly rebuked for this by the head of their family. Dislocation of the normal scheme of ritual and ceremonial co-operation in the ancestor cult and in public ceremonies such as funerals is particularly disturbing. It serves to focus attention on the interpretation of actions that damage lineage solidarity as offences against the ancestors. Public opinion, the point of view of the majority, which always favours the greater solidarity as the source of stability and normality in corporate relations, becomes critical. In due time one of the opponents of the dispute dies; and according to custom the mystical cause of his death is sought by divination. The technique and social setting of the divining session make it a reflection of public sentiment. The diviner brings the simmering conflict in the lineage into the open and relates the death to it. His verdict, coming ostensibly from the ancestors, concludes with commands from them to put the situation right by means of sacrifices and a ritual reconciliation. This is the commonest way in which the ancestor cult emerges as a sanction of reintegration in the lineage or clan. But it presupposes the existence of ritual ties and common ritual obligations among lineage and clan kin; and it comes as the culmination of a social reaction to the anomalies arising from intra-clan conflicts.

We have space only for one illustrative case history. Many years ago Gbaleg of Ten-Puhug insulted the then Chief of Tongo. The chief pronounced a curse on him; and rather than apologize Gbaleg went to settle in one of the peripheral settlements taking his younger sons with him. His oldest son, Nangbeog, dissociating himself from his father, stayed behind at Tongo. Years passed. There was a new Chief of Tongo. Yet Gbaleg remained unrepentant. In 1937 he died, a very old man, boasting that after all he had got the better of the chiefs of Tongo. But the diviner revealed that the ancestors had caused him to die because of

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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613 A maximal lineage is not only an organic genealogical unit, it is also *ipso facto* an organic ritual unit. The focus of its genealogical differen-
769 tiation from and relative autonomy in relation to other like units, as well as of its corporate solidarity and its continuity in time, is the cult
778 of its founding ancestor. The material symbol of this is the shrine (*ɔɔyar*) of that ancestor, custody of which is vested in the head (i.e. the most senior male) of the lineage. Among the Talis each segment of a composite clan has its lineage *bɔyar*, distinguishing it from the other segments of the clan. But, in addition, groups of maximal lineages belonging, severally, to *different* clans, and not necessarily united *inter se* by ties of clanship, collaborate in the cult of their collective ancestors. The collective ancestors are believed to dwell in a *bɔyar* known as an External *Bɔyar*. An External *Bɔyar* is usually a sacred grove, or a shallow cave in the hill-side, where the community meets for the ritual of the cult. The most important rites of the cult occur during the Harvest Festival, when thanksgiving sacrifices are offered and young men of the group are initiated into its mysteries by special ceremonies.

771 Clanship ties, as we have mentioned, constitute the principal factor
794 of social integration among all the Tallensi. Among the Talis the cult of the External *Bɔyar* is another important factor of cohesion and
182 equilibrium. It unites segments of different clans in the worship of
769 the ancestors, and is common to the majority of Talis clans. It represents a system of social bonds that cut across and counterpoise those of clanship. But this system is itself counterpoised, on the plane of religious values, by the organization of the Earth cult. Groups of maximal lineages belonging severally to *different* clans, which are not associated in the cult of the External *Bɔyar*, collaborate in the rites of
[778] the Earth cult. Each such group has its special Earth shrines, generally in the form of sacred groves (*tɔŋgbaŋ*). Thus each maximal lineage of a composite clan among the Talis has one field of corporate social relations in terms of clanship ties, a different field of corporate social relations in terms of the External *Bɔyar* cult, and yet a third field of corporate social relations in terms of the Earth cult. The system as a whole forms a remarkable structure of mutually balancing fields of social and politico-ritual relations integrated into a complex unity. Sectional loyalties in one direction or on one level are counterpoised by similar loyalties in another direction or at another level. And the system as a whole stands under the governance of the supreme sanctions of Tale social life, the ancestor cult and the Earth cult. To crown it all, moreover, there is the ritually sanctioned and regulated polar opposition of Talis and Namoos focused in the relationship of the chiefship and the tendaana-ship.

The Internal Constitution of the Maximal Lineage

613 In this scheme of clanship ties and politico-ritual relationships the

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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602 577 These norms of kinship the Tallensi regard as axiomatic, one might say as the *a priori* moral premisses of their social behaviour. Behind the utility of kinship in practical life and the jural and ritual sanctions that buttress kinship ties stands the notion of kinship as the rock-bottom category of social relations, inviolable in its own right. The root of this notion lies in the bond between parent and child and it reflects the fact that genealogical relationship is the binding medium of Tale social structure. The Tallensi are outspoken sceptics about human nature. They take it for granted that the ideal norms of kinship will often be violated. They know well, however, that they are usually effective and cannot be destroyed by the transgressions of individuals; for these, in the end, always bring their own revenge and are compensated for in the total flow of collective life. In any case, the lapses of individuals, and the fact that strong sanctions exist to check them, do not diminish the absolute, *a priori* character of kinship.

602 769 It is worth noting that economic reciprocity—which is a conspicuous element in kinship, especially among close kin—and jural rights and duties have a much less direct connexion with this fundamental assumption of kinship than religious bonds have. This is connected with the important place of ancestor worship in Tale society. To trace genealogical relationship it is necessary to recollect common ancestors; and if these have religious value, ritual allegiance to a common ancestor or ancestress inevitably forms an intrinsic feature of kinship ties and their most powerful sanction. The more distant a genealogical tie is, the more does it become a matter of moral and ritual, rather than of jural or economic, relations. We shall see this in more detail when we come to compare social relations within the domestic family with the relations of kinship outside the domestic family.

Two Classes of Kinship Relations

602 Any relation of kinship belongs to one of two classes. If people say 'We are *dɔŋam*', the basic analogy they have in mind is that of siblings. Two men who are cognatically related to the same lineage—e.g. two men who have a common maternal uncle's lineage (*ahɔb yir*) or whose fathers or grandfathers had a common maternal uncle's lineage—describe themselves thus. They visualize their relationship primarily as one of common though independent religious allegiance to a particular line of common ancestors, in sacrifices to whom they may both partake. By the operation of the lineage principle two lineages might consider themselves to be related in such a manner. Kɔnbamɛŋ and Pudiniba, two young men of the same clan but of different sections of the clan, were good friends. When I asked them how their friendship had arisen, they resorted, characteristically, to the idiom of kinship. Being members of the same clan is not a sufficient reason for so personal a relationship as friendship. The reason they adduced was that they were both sister's

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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his friend's children. Tale sentiment takes no cognizance of physical paternity in this situation. No kinship tie is recognized between the physiological father and the child he was deputed to beget. One might almost describe it as, from their point of view, a kind of artificial insemination.

The case of an unmarried woman's child (*yi-yeem-bii*) is different. It is brought up as the foster-child of her father or brother. If it is a girl, no difficulties occur, as she will eventually marry and Tale kinship ideas permit *her* children to regard her mother's lineage as their mother's brother's lineage (*ahəb yir*). She will even be allowed to marry into her mother's clan provided it is a different major segment of the clan. Several instances of this are on record; for no stigma attaches to anybody concerned, since an illegitimate child is not a true clan member.

An illegitimate boy's circumstances are not so easy. The evidence of two cases I was acquainted with amply confirms conventional opinion on this subject. Such a boy will grow up to all intents and purposes as a child of his mother's father's or brother's family and as a full member of the clan. He will be treated exactly like other sons of the family, whom he will call his brothers. His quasi-father will, for example, provide the cattle and take the responsibility for his marriage, as would not be done for a legitimate sister's son (*ahəŋ*) growing up in his maternal uncle's (*ahəb*) home. But he has two fundamental disabilities, which nothing can overcome and which pass, by the principle of the corporate identity of the lineage, to his agnatic male descendants. He has no right to inherit his quasi-father's patrimonial estate, though he may be permitted to do so if there are no other heirs; and he has no right to sacrifice directly to his spirit, or consequently, to the lineage ancestors. He cannot, therefore, succeed to the custody of lineage ancestors' shrines or hold an office vested in the lineage. The tie of true agnatic descent, which alone confers these rights, cannot be fabricated.

An illegitimate boy's status in the lineage is in fact, therefore, inferior to that of his quasi-brothers. He is always liable to a certain amount of covert contempt, though good manners forbid the mention of his irregular descent in the normal course of events. But if he gets involved in a quarrel with his quasi-siblings or quasi-clansmen, even as a child, they might well taunt him as an interloper (*zaŋkuomər*). His lot may be harder, if he has an intractable character, than that of a sister's son (*ahəŋ*) living with his mother's brother (*ahəb*); for the latter has a home of his own to fall back upon, where he is entitled, by right of legitimate descent, to his patrimonial inheritance, protection, and communion in the ancestor cult. In no circumstances, however, can an illegitimate son be deprived of those rights that belong to him. His quasi-father's home is his home, his mother's clan his clan. From him may spring an accessory lineage of the clan. In theory, incidentally, he may marry a daughter of a different major segment of his adoptive clan, but I know

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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The Ritual Coefficient of Patriliny

602 769 All these cases of irregular paternity bring out a point of central importance in native thought. As we shall see in more detail later, the bonds of physical consanguinity and the concomitant social ties created by parenthood are *ipso facto* spiritual and moral bonds. They have a ritual coefficient in which the natives see their deepest meaning and value. One's bonds with one's lineage imply a ritual bond with one's patrilineal ancestors and other mystical forces associated with the existence and well-being of the lineage. They are the chief mystical powers governing the life of the individual. Legitimate paternity is a *sine qua non* for a right relationship with one's agnatic ancestor spirits who watch over one's whole life from the moment of birth. There is a spiritual hiatus between an illegitimate son or a slave's son and his adoptive lineage ancestors. Being only indirectly under their tutelage, and unable to gain direct contact with them by offering sacrifices himself, he cannot use them to master the vicissitudes and frustrations of life as freely as a true scion of their line. Also, as we have seen, the ancestor spirits are the principal sanction enforcing a man's rights to full filial status in his physical father's lineage. As we have observed, political and ritual office can be held only by men who are legitimate members of the lineage in which these offices are vested; and the sanction for this lies in the key functions of these offices in the cult of the ancestors and of the other mystical powers coupled with the lineage.

834 842 769 All social relations in which agnatic descent has a decisive function have this ritual coefficient. Legitimate paternity is bound up with a man's exclusive rights over his wife's reproductive powers, conferred on him by marriage. A child's legitimate paternity is jeopardized if it is conceived or born in a situation in which its father's marital rights do not prevail. Hence, sexual intercourse between a man and his wife (and by extension between any man of the husband's medial lineage and a woman of the wife's medial lineage) at her paternal home is rigorously tabooed; it is a ritual 'pollution of the room (*sayam dug*)'—i.e. an outrage against the lineage identity—of the girl's father; for a woman has the status of a daughter in her father's house, where she comes under her father's authority and the tutelage of his ancestors.

611 769 In keeping with this, a child must not be born in its mother's father's, or brother's house. Its ties with its maternal kin must not be confounded with its bonds with its paternal kin. These represent opposed forces in its social world, and matrilateral kinship ties must not be allowed to become a threat to lineage ties. A woman bears a child to her husband, an additional member of his lineage and clan. When she conceives, it is the right and duty of her husband and his family to care for her. His ancestor spirits must guard her and the unborn child. In the perilous hour of childbirth she must be cared for by her husband and his family,

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and watched over by his ancestors. If she or the child dies in childbirth the responsibility falls on her husband. A child should be born under its father's roof, literally into the lineage to which it comes as a profit (*ŋoor*) and a responsibility, and under the auspices of its patrilineal ancestors, the spiritual arbiters of its destiny, to whom it will later in life bring sacrifices. Its life will depend on these ancestors, one of whom will immediately demand to be made its spiritual guardian, charged with preserving its life (*mar u ŋɔvɔr*).

Not only should a child be born under its father's roof, but it should, ideally, be reared, or at least be brought through the first dangerous months of infancy, in its father's house. Circumstances occasionally compel a child to be entrusted to the care of its mother's family, and the Tallensi are practical enough to accept this necessity with equanimity. But they are extremely reluctant to let a young infant pass out of the direct tutelage of its paternal kin and ancestors even for a short while. Thus strong objection is raised if a young wife takes her infant and goes to stay at her parents' house for some time. Here, again, practical necessity may leave no alternative, but there is always a feeling of uneasiness, as can be seen from the following case. When Nindɔyat of Zubiuŋ died, his youngest wife went home to her father's house at Tɔŋ-Seug, about a quarter of a mile from her late husband's house, taking her infant of some six months with her. Nindɔyat's brother and prospective heir tried to prevent her going, but she was not well, and they had to admit that she would be better cared for by her mother than by her co-wives. So they allowed her to go. A couple of weeks later, however, the baby fell ill, and though the young mother was staying only a few minutes' walk from her late husband's house, she returned to it immediately. 'She came running back home', her late husband's brother told me, 'because the child was ill. Its (dead) father had not agreed for it to be taken away (that is, the dead father, now a spirit, had mystically caused the child's illness as a sign of his displeasure). And supposing the child were to die at its maternal uncle's house? Should we not say that they had caused the death of our child?' The proper ritual measures to cure the child, without which practical leechcraft could not avail, could only be taken by its father or his representative in its father's house. The young mother believed this as firmly as her late husband's heir.

For all these reasons it is a taboo (*kihɔr*) for a child to be born in its mother's father's house. His ancestor spirits cannot watch over mother and child, for they do not 'own (*so*)' the child. It is, therefore, dangerous for the child's health and chances of survival. Of course, such a thing may, and sometimes does happen by accident. Then the child's father must, whenever he can afford it, erase the pollution by the ceremony of 'removing the blood (*vaa ziem*)' of the birth from his father-in-law's house. He sends a sheep and beer to his father-in-law as a placation

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gift. Accepting the gift, the old man calls on his ancestors to bless his son-in-law and to forgive the offence. The beer is drunk by the elders of the father-in-law's clan segment. This ceremony should be performed before the child is old enough to visit its maternal grandparents. For if the child visits its mother's father's house before the pollution is erased and sets eyes—as inevitably it must—on the midden heap, where its placenta is buried, it will die. Instances are known of men who, defying convention and the ancestor spirits, have taken daughters from their husbands, owing to non-payment of bride-price, just before they were due to bear. Decent folk regard such behaviour as little short of monstrous, for it places mother and child in great danger, bereft as they are of the care and spiritual guardianship of the child's paternal kin and ancestors. It is for this reason, Tallensi say, that it is a taboo to demand a girl's bride-price while she is pregnant. Many a man wins a respite from his father-in-law's importunity on account of his wife's pregnancy.

The Significance of Maternal Parentage and the Uterine Line

The Tallensi, as we have seen, insist on the equal importance of both parents in the procreation of a child. Though patrilineal descent is overwhelmingly dominant in the jural, economic, and ritual constitution of Tale society, it would be surprising if maternal origin had no institutional function in Tale social organization and ideology. In fact, as has been shown in our analysis of the lineage system,[1] the two principles of patrilineal descent and maternal origin always work together. The two ideas are inseparable in native thought and run like a cry and its echo through the whole social structure. Whenever I have discussed these matters with informants they have generally begun by enumerating all the things that make 'paternal parentage (*ba dɔŋam*)' the most important fact of one's life, and have usually concluded by pointing out that, of course, 'maternal parentage (*ma dɔŋam*)' is also of the greatest importance, though in a different way.

One indication of the sociological significance of maternal origin is the quality of the bond between mother's brother (*ahɔb*) and sister's son (*ahɔŋ*), either of the first degree or in a classificatory sense.[2] A person's own maternal uncle and maternal grandfather (*yaab*), and their inner lineage (*dug*), impinge directly and frequently on his life. The maternal uncle's home is a person's second home. He has a quasi-filial status there; and in addition to close bonds of sentiment with his uncle and his uncle's close kin, he has specific ceremonial rights and duties in relation to them. Though he has no property, succession, or inheritance rights in his uncle's home, a man has special material privileges there, which give expression to the notion of his quasi-filial status. They show that he is equated with a son in sentiment while

[1] See *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iii.

[2] Cf. ch. xi, below.

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602 578 and Ɔndieso was one of the first to come to the help of his *soog* in his sorrow. The other members of Ɔndieso's segment demonstratively remained away.

602 Other ties of matrilateral kinship also create bonds of personal attachment between members of the same maximal lineage, but none is so effective as that of uterine kinship.

The Dispersion of Uterine Kin

602 582 591 The majority of a person's uterine kin are, however, dispersed among other clans than his own. This is a natural result of the rule of clan exogamy. But Tallensi, as we shall see later,[1] tend to marry into nearby clans rather than into distant clans. A woman of clan A marries into the adjacent clan B; her daughters marry into the next clans C and D; their daughters marry into clans E and F; and so the process goes on. The result is, firstly, that with the passage of the generations the uterine line becomes more and more dispersed; and secondly, that any person's genealogically nearest uterine kin are also, generally, his spatially nearest uterine kin. In practice, it is these near *saarət* whom he knows and knows of; it is they who are concerned in witchcraft accusations or *tyuk* guilt. His more distant *saarət*—distant in both the genealogical sense and in residence—are often unknown to him. The main reason for this is that uterine kinship remains effective only through personal contact. The children of sisters know one another because their mothers have kept in touch, visited one another, and often helped one another all their lives. Similarly, the uterine grandchildren of sisters know one another, if they live near one another, because their mothers have kept in touch, though not so faithfully as true siblings. Often these contacts are maintained into the fourth generation of a woman's uterine descendants; rarely beyond the fourth generation; and a person does not, as a rule, know all his or her *saarət* whose link with him or her is a common great-grandmother. Some of them will, as likely as not, be Gorisi or Namnam and he will not even know of their existence.

602 [769] In principle, however, uterine kinship is never extinguished, and it often happens that people of different clans, who are strangers to one another, discover by chance that they are distant *saarət*. Supposing, for instance, a man proposes to make an important sacrifice to a lineage ancestor. His agnatic co-descendants of this ancestor are bound to be present; but he will also send to tell the cognatic descendants through women of that ancestor and some of them will come. Two men of different clans may be present who now discover, for the first time, that they are cognatically related through the lineage of their host. They trace out their genealogical connexion (*tumh dɔyam*) and find that they are distant *saarət*. I have seen this happen more than once, and the delight of the men concerned was a vivid testimony to the meaning

[1] Cf. Ch. XI.

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CHAPTER III

THE HOMESTEAD AND THE JOINT FAMILY

Homestead and Family—a Single Social Entity

361 PHYSICALLY a Tale settlement is an aggregation of homesteads irregularly distributed at varying distances from one another.[1] A 592 homestead is the domicile of a domestic family. The edifice of pile and thatch, and its occupants, constitute a single entity. There is no word for either apart from the other. The native concept, *yir* (pl. *yca*), a house, means primarily the joint family as a coherent social unit residing in its own dwelling. An unoccupied homestead is a dead shell, left to crumble into ruins.

592 When a homestead is abandoned it becomes a *daboog* (pl. *dabaar*), a word applied both to an empty homestead in any stage of decay and to the site of a former homestead, and carrying two main and complementary implications that spring directly from the dominance of the lineage principle in Tale social values. *Daboog* stands for something good and worthy of praise when it refers to the site of a person's father's or grandfather's homestead, or, by extension, to the site or locality of an ancestor's homestead. A *daboog* in this sense is a symbol of the origins and a portent of the good fortune of an existing lineage; it is an object of personal attachment and religious reverence; though vacant it is not dead; the spirits of the ancestors still abide there, and it may be re-occupied some day; it is a symbol of the living continuity of a line of descent. *Daboog* can also be used to describe the site of a former human habitation left deserted and forlorn through the extinction of a line of descent. No ancestor spirits dwell there; it is an accursed spot, a monument of human sin, and a symbol of the most terrible mystical retribution that can befall a Taləŋ. A curse one sometimes hears uttered when a grave injury has been suffered at the hands of an unknown person is: 'May his house lie in ruins and tobacco be grown there (*K'u yir doon daboog ka ba ŋŋ taba waal nŋŋha*).' A ruined homestead provides an exceptionally fertile patch of soil, suitable for growing tobacco. If a man's line of descent is extinguished, there will be no one to claim ownership of his *daboog*, and anyone who wishes will come and plant tobacco there.

592 A homestead is always built for a particular family. From the day 769 when the site is chosen it is the scene of human labour, of organized co-operation, and of religious and moral preoccupations. It must be lived in from the laying of the foundations, lest evil mystical agencies desecrate it. Ancestor shrines are immediately installed in it; for the spirits of a man's fathers and forefathers abide in his house, presiding

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. x.

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over its destinies just as they controlled its social and economic activities in their lifetime.

A new homestead is erected for preference on the site of a man's father's or other patrilineal ancestor's *daboog*. Such a site is consecrated through having been the scene of human residence in the past, and through the abiding association with it of the ancestors who formerly lived there. If a man builds on virgin land, the site must not only be technically prepared for habitation, it must also be ritually won for human ends. Hence the tendaana under whose ritual jurisdiction the spot falls must first consecrate it, and the new dwelling must be magically protected against those vague personifications of irrational maleficence, mystically dangerous stones (*kubeet*) and trees (*tebees*). So complete is the identification of the family with its dwelling, that if persistent misfortune dogs the family after its removal to a new homestead, and all other ritual measures seem to have failed, the onus is finally thrown on the homestead itself. 'The house has not accepted them (*yir la pu diebame*)', the diviners discover. The whole complex of mystical agencies which endow the house with its moral value for the family is against them.

In the single homestead, as in the settlement of which it is the elementary cell and the structural epitome, Tale social organization has three fundamental aspects—material, associational, and moral. They represent the three major kinds of interests and ends that govern Tale social life. And though all forms of social relations among the Tallensi always have these three classes of components, they do not always work in harmony with one another.

In the homestead, as in the settlement, social relations move in two planes: the plane of lineage relations, in which the canon of agnatic descent dominates corporate action and directs individual conduct, and the plane of domestic relations, in which the bonds of marriage and parenthood, and the bilateral ties of kinship in the narrowest sense, control the behaviour of people towards one another. The persons who form a unit in one plane fall into separate, opposed units in the other. Husband and wife belong to mutually exclusive lineages; brothers by the same father but different mothers belong to separate matricentral segments of the family and are nuclei of independent conjugal families.

The Ideas and Values embodied in the Homestead

It is far truer of the Talɔŋ than of the modern Englishman to say that his home is his castle, though not as literally as Cardinall imagines. The natives of these parts, he declares, build their homesteads solidly and a bow-shot apart in order the better to defend them against hostile neighbours.[1] This romantic explanation, however, has

[1] Cardinall, A. W., *Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, pp. 2, 14.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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she will become very discontented. A young wife sometimes runs off to her father's home because she thinks she ought to have her own *dug* and her husband has been dilatory about it; and she will refuse to return until he convinces her of his intention to build her *dug* immediately. The observance of this rule is an essential element in the structure of the domestic family. It is indispensable for the satisfactory working of the domestic economy and for the mutual adjustment of person to person. A wife's separate quarters stand for her relative autonomy as wife, mother and housekeeper, *vis-à-vis* the other women of the family.

As the head of the house is *yirdaana*, master of the house, so the senior woman of the house—his mother, or senior wife—is the *dugdaana*, the mistress of the rooms. Every woman is the *dugdaana* of her own apartments, but the mistress of the principal *dug* is the *dugdaana* of the whole house.

In a polygynous family, or what might be called a multicellular family, the senior *dugdaana* has more authority in domestic affairs, and more esteem in the eyes of the public than the other women of the household have. Whether she is the *yirdaana*'s mother or his senior wife, she is the central pillar of his domestic establishment, honorifically more than actively in the case of the former, actively as well as honorifically in the case of the latter.

One sign of this is that most of the ancestor and medicine shrines that are kept indoors rest in the *dendɔŋo* and rooms of the senior woman. They include a man's personal shrines, as well as those of which he is custodian as head of a lineage segment. Sacrifice is offered to these shrines in this *dendɔŋo*, the women and children of the family often taking part. A man's ancestors keep watch and ward both indoors and out over the things, the place, and the people most precious to him.

When a person dies he or she must not only be gathered to the ancestors, but must subsequently be ritually brought back, as a spirit, into the living quarters, the veritable home. The expression '*Kpeehu la dugni*—bring him [her] into the *dug*', used for this as well as the customary rites, make this clear.

The intimate domestic life of a family goes on mainly in the *dendɔŋo*. Meals are often cooked and always eaten there. Food is never cooked outside the homestead except for ritual or ceremonial purposes. A woman does much of her domestic work in her *dendɔŋo*. Her babies learn to crawl and to take their first steps there. She entertains guests and relatives, and receives her daughter's suitors there. When the crops are harvested they are spread out to dry in the *dendɔŋo* before being stored. A man often sits about in his wife's *dendɔŋo* when he has a leisurely manual task in hand. Youths and girls come to dance there when an elderly person's funeral is celebrated. And on pleasant nights, after a satisfying meal, men, women, and children sit there conversing or gossiping or asking riddles.

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kinship ties with the mother's brother and his lineage, are all evidence of the imperishability of a woman's ties with her parental family.

Last but not least, a woman continues all her life to be under the care of her patrilineal ancestors. She must observe their totemic taboos. One of them is her spirit guardian (*sεyər*), to whom her husband will have to send animals on her behalf as sacrifices on critical occasions such as her first confinement, and from whose tutelage she must be ritually released on death. Whenever an important sacrifice to these ancestors takes place in her paternal home she is told, and has the right to participate and to receive a definite share of the sacrificial meat. She has duties to these lineage ancestors too. Thus whenever a shrine of a lineage founder passes to a new lineage head, a daughter of the lineage is selected by divination to fetch it to its new home. Her good or ill fortune as wife and mother depends very much on that occult arbiter of life which the Tallensi conceive of as a personal Predestined Fate (*Nuor Yin*); and this is associated with one's patrilineal ancestors. If a woman's children die one after another she is being dogged by an evil Predestiny; and only her paternal kin can perform the ritual of exorcising it. Finally, when she dies, though she is buried by her husband's lineage according to their rites, and her spirit is aggregated to those of their ancestors, since it is her sons who will sacrifice to and worship her spirit, her paternal kin also perform a short and symbolic funeral ceremony for her. Thus she is 'brought home (*mar kul*)' to be received amongst her paternal ancestors, and the cycle of her life is completed.

The Opposition between the Kinship Ties and the Marital Ties of Spouses, and its Resolution

All her life a woman is subject to the pull of her patrilateral kinship ties. As a wife, however, she must submit more and more to the contrary pull of her marital ties. Her husband is even more strongly ruled by his ties with his natal family and patrilineal kin. Many of the chances and changes of marriage come down to the question of how the partners adjust themselves to the opposing loyalties and interests associated with their divergent kinship ties. A marriage reaches stability when the partners achieve common interests and mutual bonds strong enough to hold them together in the face of their respective patrilateral kinship ties. That is why the birth of children plays such a vital part in stabilizing a marriage.

Marriage, then, is in one aspect a unique relationship between one man and one woman; in this context, peculiarities of personality influence the fate of a particular marriage. In another aspect, or more accurately, perhaps, at the other end of the scale of marriage relations, it is a union between a man and a woman who represent and remain

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593 851 In the joint family it marks them off as a separate and potentially independent family segment. A mother of two children usually has her own quarters, or her own part of her mother-in-law's *dug*, if her husband's mother is one of several wives of her father-in-law. She is a *dugdaana*, mistress of her rooms, in a small way, with some freedom of action where its affairs are concerned. She begins to regard the work that falls to her share, not merely as her contribution to the economy of the household, but more as serving the needs of her children and husband. He, for his part, begins to think of the future in terms of his wife and children. He may still accept a position of dependence on his father or older brother as a matter of course; but the separate needs of his wife and children are recognized in the allocation of food-supplies. He makes an effort to extend his private farm plot in order to grow a little food to tide his own family segment over lean periods. It may be many years before he achieves independence, but his aspirations towards it have a definite channel and a clear objective.

593 The greater intimacy of husband and wife, after several years of marriage, is shown in their greater familiarity with each other in public. The woman does not hesitate to address her husband by his name or title, and he may use a nickname for her. By the time a woman has grown old with her husband she is on terms of comradeship and equality with him, for she now identifies herself completely with his interests. An old couple often show great devotion to and affection for each other. The man often has such confidence in his wife that he will discuss all his affairs with her, and she can exercise considerable influence on his decisions in family matters, though the last word still rests with him. Though she still shows deference to him in public, she no longer keeps in the background. She speaks her mind freely to him and before him. Often when I have talked to men about domestic organization, kinship, marriage, children, or even their private religious and magical shrines, their wives of senior standing have stopped to join in the conversation. I have seen a lineage head's senior wife listen to a group of lineage elders thresh out a domestic squabble and give her opinion without restraint. A suitor always tries to gain the favour of a girl's mother; for, though she lacks authority to give him the girl, she can sometimes be persuaded to connive at an elopement, or at least to say a good word for him with her husband, and this may sway the balance in his favour.

593 ●769 Nevertheless, it is a basic assumption of the Tallensi that a wife never ceases entirely to be a 'stranger' in her husband's clan. For she never, as we have learnt, loses the social identity conferred on her by birth as a member of a different clan. She does not adopt her husband's totemic taboos; and though her health and fertility, being essential for the satisfactory performance of her wifely role, come under the guardianship of his ancestors, she does not participate in the cult of his lineage ancestors. When she attends the sacrifices made to domestic shrines by the joint

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family head, she does so as a privileged spectator. She has this privilege because her welfare is bound up with that of her husband and children, and theirs with hers. She remains outside the religious and moral solidarity of her husband's clan and maximal lineage, and, indeed, has only a contingent interest in the solidarity of his minimal lineage. It is noteworthy that women, both daughters and wives, are excluded from the esoteric ritual activities in which the moral sanctions of the unity and continuity of lineage and clan are embodied. In religious, jural, and political matters—all of which are closely interconnected—Tale women have the status of minors. This exclusion is most stringent in the case of the Earth cult and the cult of the lineage *bəyar*. But the segregation is not so rigid as to keep women in entire ignorance of or wholly disinterested in these male monopolies. Their welfare depends upon the propitious outcome of these activities as much as that of their menfolk. They see, hear, and discuss among themselves and with their menfolk ritual affairs and jural actions that concern their husbands' lineages of which, indeed, wives and children often form the main subject. They grind the flour, brew the beer, and witness the preparations for esoteric religious rites. They see the public and semi-public phases of big religious ceremonies and overhear the endless consultations and discussions between the men which these ceremonies always produce.

A wife, therefore, can be in sympathy with the interests and can respect the values that rule the actions of her husband and her sons as members of their agnatic descent group, while being herself excluded from an effective public rôle in relation to them. But a cleavage remains. Thus in a conflict between her husband's clan and her father's clan she might very well take the side of the latter, not openly, it is true, but covertly. How strongly the natives feel this was shown at the divination ceremony following the death of Siiyɛlib of Təŋ-Seug. This divination was so cryptic and involved that I could make no sense of it. Fortunately I was able to get an explanation from one of my most trustworthy informants, a close agnate of the dead man. Siiyɛlib's death, it appeared, was a mystical retribution for a grave sin he had committed many years before. He had been one of the instigators of the white man's attack on the Hill Talis, and was an accessory, therefore, to the slaughter of many men. Now there were several Talis present at the funeral—kinsmen, affines, and, last but not least, wives of the dead man and his close agnates. If Siiyɛlib's sin were publicly brought out in the divination it would stir up all their hostile feelings. They would feel resentful towards Siiyɛlib's surviving agnates on account of his complicity in the destruction of their fathers and grandfathers. And this would produce strife between the men of Seug and their Talis wives, their Talis cognates, and their Talis affines.

The social and psychological cleavage which underlies all the relations of husband and wife is the structural kernel around which the

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761 whom it was living, had also died suddenly. Diŋkaha, greatly concerned
593 for his wife, warned all the members of his family not to say anything to her about it. If she heard of this calamity now, he said, she would surely die. Later on, when she had settled down again he would himself break the news to her.

765 Incidentally, fathers do not always get over the death of a child,
593 whether an infant or an adult, with ease. It is easier for a young man, the Tallensi say, because he thinks to himself that his wife can still bear children to him. But even young men have been known to abandon
[762] themselves to despair. An extreme case was that of Dɔyayam, who pierced himself with a poisoned arrow when his favourite child died; and the average Talɔŋ, it must be remembered, speaks of suicide with contempt. The grief of a father when a grown-up or adolescent son dies is very moving. When Pumaan's son Kpeemi and Tinta'alɔm's son Suor, both fine young men in the twenties, died, it was as if a shock ran through the whole community. On both occasions the men of the clan gathered in full force to mourn at the bereaved house and the atmosphere of tragedy was felt by all. I cannot forget the picture of Pumaan, as taciturn and dour a man as one could meet anywhere, holding himself tautly, his face ashen, his eyes staring ahead, stoically suppressing his despair as an elder should do. Tɛndaan Teroog, an old man over seventy, made no pretence of stoicism when his eldest and only adult son died leaving a number of wives and children. He simply pined away and followed his son to the grave in a couple of months.

593 When Tallensi say that it is hard to bring a child into the world, they
769 have in mind more than the physiological facts of birth, and the dangers of infancy and childhood. They think of the whole gamut of social and emotional relations between parents and children arising out of the fact of birth. For a Talɔŋ, as we have seen, does not become altogether independent of his parents until their death—nor, indeed, even after their death. The pragmatic bonds of jural and economic dependence become transformed into the equally strong, nay stronger bonds of ritual dependence on the ancestor spirits of whom the parents are the immediate prototypes and intermediaries. And in many ways the ritual relationships of the Tallensi with the spirits of their parents give a truer insight into the parent–child bond than their visible behaviour towards one another. 'Fear the dead but do not fear the living (*Zom kpiim ka di zo vopa*)', says one of their proverbs which enshrines their feeling that a person is under a far more compelling bond with his parents when they are dead than during their life. We shall return to this presently.

593 The gist of our analysis is that to the Tallensi parenthood means responsibility that weighs heavily at times. This comes out both in the notion that bearing or begetting a child is hard and in the correlated notion of the importance of rearing. At the same time there is no native, man or woman, who would not insist that a person has lived in vain if he

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593 against one's mother—*'ɔn dɔŋi la zugu*—because he begot you'. One's
577 dependence on him increases one's attachment and sense of duty towards him. Dependence on one's father is a good thing, a highly desirable and advantageous state of affairs, and the essence of filial piety is to accept this condition of dependence as the right thing in life. Tallensi say that a man has no cares while his father is alive. He looks after all one's affairs (*maal i yɛla*). He takes charge of the farming, attends to all ritual matters such as sacrifices to the ancestors and the consultation of diviners if one is ill, and assumes responsibility for such things as the payment of bride-price. He takes care of the house (*gur yiri*) both in the physical sense of always staying at home and in the jural and ritual sense of being its responsible head, leaving his sons free to go about as they please. The emphasis is on the father as the one who bears all responsibility for one's welfare in economic, jural, and ritual matters. That is why, the natives say, a man mourns the death of a father, for henceforth he must take on the burden of responsibility for himself. It means the end of protection and security in relation to society at large and to the spirits of the ancestors.

The picture is overdrawn but not inaccurate. The burden of social responsibility does not weigh so heavily as this statement implies. Siŋ and Gbana, both young men in the twenties, managed their households very well. But both often bemoaned their fate in having been left fatherless when still boys. 'If my father were alive I would have had a wife by now', said Siŋ, 'and Na'abzɔ (his proxy father) would not have used my sister's bride-price cattle for his own purposes.' The death of the father often means the uprooting of his sons. 'Now', said Ktlibsɔ after his father's funeral ceremonies were over, 'we (he and his brothers) shall become poor men. When our father was alive we had a large home farm to cultivate. Now our junior father (*ba-pit*) will take that and we shall have to go and farm our bush farms. Soon the day will come when we shall move out, for who knows how a *ba-pit* will look after you?' I have heard boys of 9 or 10 talk in this way after the death of their father. It is easier for a woman who has her husband's protection. But even she suffers a sad loss in the death of her own father. His heirs, even her own brothers, will never have quite the same intimate and personal interest in her and her children.

● [769] There is a direct connexion between this emphasis on the dependence of children on parents and the worship of the ancestors. Nor is the underlying feeling of a hidden antagonism between father and son, of which we shall have more to say presently, altogether incongruous with this overt stress on the security the father symbolizes. The social relations of father and son, at every stage of the latter's development, are always a compromise between the mutual dependence of father and son and the limited dependence enjoyed by the latter.

There is not the same degree of tension between mother and child or

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even mother and daughter, and hence, perhaps, Tallensi do not have such a definite conventional rationalization of their attitudes towards the mother. They say you respect your mother and cherish her in old age because she bore and fed you. In childhood you were more attached to her than to your father; you ran to her whenever you were tired or hungry or ill and she comforted and fed you; as an adult you realize the importance of 'father's begetting' (*ba-dɜyam*) in jural, ritual, and economic matters such as marriage or landowning, and in crises like sickness or death; but your mother is still honoured as the centre of your domestic arrangements if you are a man, and if you are a woman, she is the one person you can always come to in sickness or trouble, in the certainty of loving attention. Comfort, emotional security, and food—these are the distinguishing qualities of a mother in Tale thought. It corresponds to the more personal character of the bonds between mother and child, by contrast with the jurally and ritually weighted ties with the father.

Tallensi say that one must respect one's living parents; but to one's dead parents one owes reverence and submission in surpassing degree. That is what the proverb 'Fear the dead and do not fear the living' means to them.[1] One can defy a living parent sometimes and rely on being forgiven; one cannot defy a dead parent. One can live without the help of a living parent, if necessary, but not without the mystical protection of one's dead parents.

In the religious practice of the Tallensi the ancestors exercise their powers without compunction. They punish and slay as arbitrarily as they bless. Every dry season men return to rebuild their parental homes which have been allowed to lie in decay for many years. They come from Mampurugu, from outlying parts of Taleland, or from Ashanti and the Colony. Some have been away for years. Pal of Zubiuŋ had a prosperous farm in Mampurugu, where he had gone to settle on being discharged from the regiment after the war of 1914–18. During his fifteen years in Mampurugu he had become fairly wealthy, with five wives, a horse, several head of cattle, and a quantity of good clothes. Dema of Tɛnzugu, who joined the regiment as far back as 1912 and had lived in Ashanti as a trader since his discharge after the war, was obviously a man of considerable wealth by Tale standards. Both returned to rebuild their fathers' homesteads in 1935–6. They told the same story. Wives and children had died; there had been repeated bouts of sickness in the family; other misfortunes had piled up over the years; and all, as the diviners declared, because they had 'rejected (*zayah*) their fathers (*banam*)' by remaining in foreign parts. It did not matter much while there were older brothers at home to 'give water (*zaŋ kuom ti*)', that is, make sacrifices, to the ancestral shrines. But

[1] The verb zo, to fear, has a wide range of meaning and here it means to show respect towards, to revere, to stand in awe of.

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when they were left as heads of their lineage segments they had to come home. Their fathers' spirits would have killed them if they had not done so. Dema is frankly happy to be home again amongst his own people after his wanderings. Pal, who is dependent on farming for his living, still speaks with a tinge of regret of the fine farm he had to abandon in Mampurugu. But he feels that he had no option, and there is even an element of pride in his submission to the *force majeure* of his dead father, since he is now the head of his lineage segment. It was the same with Na'abzɔ, Kayar, Yinworəb, Baŋgam-Teroog, and many others, too numerous to mention, who returned home after years abroad in order to 'give water' to their fathers.

While the whole ancestor cult is an elaborate expression of filial piety towards the dead parents, one of the commonest ways in which the observer comes across it is in the practice of leechcraft. Almost every native owns some 'roots (*ŋaŋa*)' for the treatment of sickness, and the therapeutic value of the roots lies not so much in their physical properties as in the fact that their owner is able, by right of ownership, to mobilize magical virtue in their support. As a preliminary to the curative rites the owner of the roots always calls upon his or her ancestors for a blessing, and this opens with the phrase 'My father, I shall call you (first). You have no concern with this matter, but I call on you (to help me) for the sake of begetting, because you begot me (*Mba, n-na mbuola nyɛni. Nyɛn baha ka dɛni, ka mbuoli la dɔŋam la zug, nyɛn dɔŋəm la zugu*).'

Naturally the ritual aspect of filial piety is of greater importance for a man than for a woman, considered in terms of their social personalities and with regard to the father; for he stands for the lineage and clan, with all that membership of these units implies, for the land and other patrimonial property, and for the ancestral home (*daboog*). But it is important for a woman, too, and in relation to the mother as well. A woman is the spiritual ward (*sɔŋəraan*) of one of her paternal forbears and remains under that ancestor's or ancestress's guardianship all her life. And it is through her father that she maintains good ritual relations with her ancestor guardian—either through sacrifices made by her father on her behalf or through the intermediation of her father's spirit when he is dead. Moreover, her father's spirit is of great importance to her children. It is significant that if a male line dies out a female survivor takes on the duty of sacrificing to the lineage shrines, which she can only approach through her father's spirit.

A man's mother's spirit is of as much importance for him as an individual as his father's. He has a shrine dedicated to her and other shrines dedicated to ancestors of hers. A mother's shrine is often the first after his *Yin* shrine to be dedicated by a man and is always felt to be more peculiarly his own than a father's shrine, which is heritable by half-brothers. A man would not return from abroad because of the demands

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of his dead mother's spirit; she is not tied to the lineage home in the same way as a father's spirit is and can be 'given water' more easily wherever the man happens to be. Nevertheless, his welfare and that of his dependants rests as much on his maintaining good relations with her spirit as with his father's spirit.

Filial piety among the Tallensi is a great deal more than a customary injunction to honour and respect one's parents. Psychologically it is a very complex sentiment. Even during their lifetime parents have quasi-mystical attributes, as we shall see more clearly when we consider the relations of parents and first-born children, and these dominate the sentiment. A parent can bless or curse a child. A parent's curse, in particular, is greatly dreaded, as we have previously noted, and, in consequence, only resorted to in case of gross affront or unforgivable defiance on the part of a child. If a parent expresses or merely feels resentment against a child, that is equivalent to a curse which may cause it illness or other harm. Thus one element in the sentiment of filial piety is respect for the blessing and fear of the curse of a parent. That is why, men say, it is sometimes embarrassing to have an old mother in one's house, though one is bound to keep her, both in duty and out of affection. For old women become completely egoistic. All they think of is having enough to eat and being comfortable, and if they are crossed they are apt to curse anybody incontinently.

In a large joint family one often finds a young man with a growing family of his own torn between his devotion to his father and his desire to be economically independent so as to provide for his wife and children more satisfactorily. He cannot go out to farm on his own without his father's blessing and consent else his venture will surely fail. He begins to drop hints or makes a tentative approach to his father. But if the latter shows displeasure he retreats at once. I have seen this happen more than once. When Təyalbɛrəgu wanted to go out to farm on his own, his father Naabdiya reproached him, saying that *he* had not deserted *his* father as Təyalbɛrəgu now wished to desert *him*. Təyalbɛrəgu apologized and withdrew. But, as Naabdiya told me, 'I still had resentment in my heart and he still secretly cherished his plan'. A couple of weeks later Təyalbɛrəgu developed a large boil in the armpit. In panic he begged an elder to ask Naabdiya to forgive him and formally withdraw his implicit curse, which, he was certain, was the cause of the boil. It was the same with Yinyɛla's son Duun. Though as an eldest son he felt entitled to start farming on his own, he dared not ask that hard old man's permission for fear that it might arouse his resentment.

It is an interesting point that when a young man who has been living and farming with his dead father's brother, for example, sets up in his own homestead, the pretext for the separation is often not an economic one. It is commonly recognized that the young man moves out because he needs more land and freedom to provide for his family by himself.

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577 But if the father's brother does not take the initiative of pointing out to
593 his 'son' that he would be better off on his own, the latter cannot do so. It would be like suggesting that his proxy father is not treating him as fairly as his own father. The usual course of events is that something goes wrong with the young man's affairs. It may be a trivial mishap, such as a hen being caught by a hyena, or something more serious, such as the sickness of wife or child. The young man goes with his proxy father to consult a diviner; and the diviner declares that the trouble was caused by the young man's own father, because the young man has not yet built his own homestead. The dead father lets it be known that he wants to go directly to his son's own house to accept sacrifices and not have to go to his brother's house as a mere guest. Thus the dictates of filial piety are subtly and doubly fulfilled.

577 Filial piety, as these examples show, is the psychological bridge
593 between the relations of parents and children in life and in the ritual
769 relationships of the living with the ancestors. All the ancestors are projections of the parents, different manifestations of the images Tale culture draws of certain aspects of the parents that do not appear in conventional, overt behaviour. This is clear, also, from the element of reverence that enters into the sentiment of filial piety.

Siŋ's father and Na'abzɔ were the sons of two brothers. When Siŋ's
577 father died, Na'abzɔ married his widow and took charge of the children.
593 But Na'abzɔ is a notoriously cantankerous person. So Siŋ took his younger brothers and mother and set up in his own homestead as soon as he was old enough. In jural and ritual matters, however, Na'abzɔ is still his 'father'. Passing Siŋ's house one day with an elder I heard sounds of violent quarrelling between him and Na'abzɔ. Na'abzɔ stood on the flat roof of a room in his house hurling abuse at Siŋ, who replied angrily, but politely, from his gateway 50 yards away. My companion and I turned aside to talk to Siŋ. It appeared that Na'abzɔ had as usual been nagging Siŋ and his brothers unreasonably. He demanded that they should leave their own farm-work to come and hoe his farm. When Siŋ asked for his help, which was indispensable, in an important ritual matter, he had refused out of petty spite; and now he had upset Siŋ's sister's marriage by arbitrary and inconsiderate demands on her husband. I asked Siŋ, 'Why don't you take hold of Na'abzɔ and thrash him? That should stop him.' He looked at me in dismay and said, 'No, no. I couldn't do that. It is forbidden. He is my father. He begot me.' My companion, almost as shocked, chimed in, 'No, you can't strike your father, you can't strike your mother. They have borne (*dɔŋa*) you. He who strikes his father or his mother is a good-for-nothing.' He went on to say that everybody knew what sort of a person Na'abzɔ was, but Siŋ
577 must be patient. It would all come right. For would not Na'abzɔ die
593 one day and Siŋ inherit all his property? Similar comments were made
627 by everybody I met about Dŋkumis's brother's son, Dmaarəb. The

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577 593 no charity (*ɔn ka sugɔru*) would perhaps have done otherwise, but Kunaanba's way was the right way.

It is on the death of a parent that filial piety is most sharply evoked, just as it is the death of a child that brings out most poignantly a parent's love and devotion. We have referred to this previously. In this matter filial sentiment and ritual sanctions converge.

764 577 593 765 The supreme act of filial piety sons owe to their parents is the performance of their mortuary and funeral ceremonies. If a man or woman dies leaving no sons then this duty falls upon his or her nearest proxy sons. The initiative and chief responsibility rest with the oldest living son. The burial rites must be carried out immediately; but when and how the funeral ceremony is to be made is for the sons to decide. No one can put pressure on them to hurry on the funeral if they wish to postpone it for several years. It is customary to delay the funeral of an elder, an old woman, or a person holding a ritual office until the third year after his or her death, ostensibly so as to enable the sons to collect the large stock of grain and the livestock required for the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the case of a man the sons exercise the social role of the [793] deceased. If he was a tendaana they will perform the duties and exercise the rights of his office, and this may be a motive for delaying his funeral beyond the customary period. The old men who are eligible for the office can object and grumble; they cannot compel a dead man's son to make his father's funeral. The issue lies between the dead man and his sons. If they delay unduly they will incur their father's anger. For until his funeral has been celebrated he dwells between the world of the living and the world of the spirits. As the Tallensi say, his one leg is in the earth (among the spirits) and his other on the surface of the earth (among the living) (*u gbɛr dɛkɔ bɛ teyni ka gbɛr dɛna bɛ doorni*). He cannot 'join his forefathers (*paag u banam*)' until he has been 'taken back into the house (*kpeeh dugni*)' as a spirit. And the situation is the same with a dead mother, though she is of less jural importance.

● 769 577 764 The duty of burying a parent and celebrating his or her funeral is the first step in the most exacting of all filial duties, the cult of the dead parents. Native thought and behaviour show that the Tallensi feel it as an inescapable compulsion of conscience, and not as a mere act of propriety. Tallensi are quite matter-of-fact about the corpse (*kum*) of a dead parent. They describe it as the 'slough (*ʃɔrɔŋ*)' of the soul (*sii*). What they are concerned about is the spirit (*kpiim*) of the dead parent. A man cannot rest secure until he has assimilated his father's or mother's spirit into the framework of his life, domesticated it, so to speak, as the expression *kpeeh dugni* shows; and this is the function of the funeral ceremony. For that reason Tallensi want to have the graves of their parents near their dwellings. True, a man's ancestor spirits accompany him wherever he goes, but they are most tangibly present in his house, where he sacrifices to them. It often happens that a man has to be

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buried in one of the peripheral settlements, or abroad, where he has been living temporarily. Then, if his sons return to the ancestral home, perhaps years after his death, he will one day, through a diviner, order them to exhume (*gurɔg*) him and rebury him among his ancestors at the ancestral home (*daboog*). The notion that when a person dies he joins his ancestors (or a woman her husband's ancestors as well as her own), and that his body should therefore lie among their bodies, is a basic idea in Tale religion and an obvious reflex of filial piety.

As the case of Sawɔŋba's daughter, previously quoted (p. 89), shows, daughters are as much bound as sons to mourn the death of a parent. All the children of the deceased must come to the funeral so as to undergo the mourning rites. They are ritually unclean until they have done so and have had their heads ritually shaved (*kuo zug*) in sign of it. Though the ritual uncleanness (*dayɔt*) of a person who has lost a parent does not interfere with normal life, it is felt to be a psychological burden, for, as we have noted, until a dead person's funeral has been made, his or her social personality is not wholly erased from the real world. I have heard children of 10 or 11 say gravely that they wished their mother's or father's funeral could be made soon so that they could 'shave off the uncleanness (*kuo dayɔt la bah*)'. The uncleanness adheres primarily to the deceased's own children, but it also affects proxy children who have no living parent (as determined by the criteria of 'fatherlessness' or 'motherlessness') of the same sex as the deceased. One of the ways in which Tallensi demonstrate respect and affection for a classificatory parent such as a father's agnatic cousin or a classificatory father's wife, who has never been a proxy parent to them, is to undergo the chief mourning rites for him or her—provided, of course, the mourner is 'fatherless' or 'motherless' in that situation. When an old man or woman who was the last of the generation of 'fathers' or 'mothers' of the inner lineage dies, the men and women of the lineage to whom he or she is a classificatory parent gather from far and wide for the funeral and all undergo the rites of shaving the head. It is not compulsory for anyone to have the head shaved for a classificatory parent, but it is a pious gesture which at the same time proclaims the solidarity of the lineage. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* might be a Tale proverb. Old grudges are forgotten—though not necessarily buried for ever—and men and women who have been estranged from their classificatory brothers and sisters or the deceased parent turn up to the funeral to do the proper thing.

Nowadays the death of a parent is one of the strongest sanctions that induce the men who go to work abroad to return home, if only for a while. The absentees may dawdle for weeks or months or even two or three years—for funeral ceremonies can be postponed, as we have noted, for periods up to three, four, or more years—but most of them come home eventually for the rites. Those who delay so long that their

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But a man's most important *Yin* is that with which certain of his ancestors are associated. This too may come to him in childhood, though it does so more commonly in early manhood. Usually it manifests itself to him through an accident or a coincidence. Thus a young man falls ill shortly after he has bought a new hoe or killed an animal in the hunt. The diviners then declare that his illness was caused by his *Yin*; his ancestors so and so, and so and so, are thus revealing themselves as his *Yin*; the hoe or the animal is their vehicle; they brought illness on him because they demand that he should accept them as his *Yin* and sacrifice to them. The young man will then build a shrine dedicated to these ancestors placing the skull of the animal or the blade of the hoe on it, and will henceforth sacrifice to them on this shrine. This is his first and most intimately personal shrine, and it plays an enormous part in his life thereafter. As far as his own personal affairs are concerned, it will always be his most important link with his ancestors. It is through his *Yin* that they exercise the most direct influence upon his life and that he seeks to maintain their goodwill specifically for himself. When he becomes head of his joint family he will entrust most of the children born into the family to his *Yin* as spirit guardian. Every important step in his social development will be registered in his relations with his *Yin*; it may be by a special sacrifice, or it may be by a change in the location of the shrine, or the addition of an ancestor to the group of ancestors who have revealed themselves (*naam*) as his *Yin*. A man's *Yin* is both the chart of his life and the helm with which he steers his way through life.

All the ancestors and ancestresses of a man have a potential mystical relevance for his life, but they have the same potential relevance for any of their descendants. His *Yin* ancestors, on the other hand, are concerned exclusively with him, for his own sake, so to speak. They form a particular combination, usually of very recent forebears, who do not belong together in just that grouping for any other of their descendants. They may be patrilateral or matrilateral ancestors or a combination of both lines. Thus a man might have as his *Yin* ancestors his father, father's father, father's father's mother, and her father, while his brother has their father, father's mother, and father's mother's father as his *Yin* ancestors. Of another pair of brothers, one's *Yin* ancestors may be their mother's father, maternal grandfather, and maternal great-grandfather; and the other's might be their mother's mother, her father, and his father (see Fig. 5, page 230).

Thus when a Talən says that his *Yin* and his eldest son's *Yin* are mutually dangerous, he is saying that his son's successful growth and development into and through manhood is a threat to his authority and primacy in the family, a symbol of the inevitable decline in his physical and mental power that comes with age, and a warning that he must in due course make way for the next generation; and yet it is also the

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and in sentiment, between oldest children and youngest children is of more than casual significance. It is as if the two major aspects of parent-child relations are split apart and distributed so as to make them more easily reconcilable. The mutual identification, mutual love and devotion of parents and children are focused in the relations of parents with their youngest children; the cleavage between successive generations is focused in the relations between parents and oldest children; and we can easily see why this is so. For it is the latter who will take the place of the parents on their death, who seem to be standing on the threshold waiting for them to die. The emphasis of the Namoos on first-born children is, as we have noted, due to the fact that it is the first-born child which makes a man and woman parents. Hence, if a first-born dies, its parents have to undergo a special purification rite; and a wife who has not borne a child to her husband does not undergo the purification rites for a widow when he dies. Later children do not change the role and status of a person in the same way; they do not make him or her more of a parent. Nor does the sex of the first-born matter, though the agnatic principle makes a first-born son of greater importance to a man than a first-born daughter. This and the principle of the equivalence of siblings explain why both sons and daughters are subject to the taboos of the first-born among the Namoos.

The Ancestors as Parent Images

The ambivalence in the relations of parents and children is more dramatically expressed in the ancestor cult than in any other aspect of Tale culture. We cannot discuss this at length here. We can only note that there is a direct continuity between the relations of parents and children in life and their relations after the parents' death. The worship of the ancestors is a culturally standardized projection on to the mystical plane of the tangle of attachments, reciprocities, tensions, and submerged antagonisms that bind parents and children to one another in life. Anyone unfamiliar with the speech and customs of the Tallensi would often find it impossible to tell, in some situations, whether a man is speaking of his living father or his dead father. The dead parents are the prototypes of all the ancestors. Distinctions of name and generation conceal the same primary images. This is clear from the fact that no man can sacrifice to an ancestor or ancestress except through the medium of the spirit of the parent who links him to that ancestor or ancestress.

It will not surprise the psychologist, however, to learn that the attributes with which the spirits of the parents are invested differ in some respects markedly from those that are conventionally assumed for living parents. The disciplinary limitations imposed by the demands of economic and social adjustment and by the rationale of reality are no longer operative. The figures of the dead parents are clothed in qualities that are in part highly magnified versions of their most praiseworthy qualities

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in real life and in part distorted reflections of the tensions that exist between parents and children in reality. It is no misrepresentation to describe them as a standardized and highly elaborated picture of the parents as they might appear to a young child in real life—mystically omnipotent, capricious, vindictive, and yet beneficent and long-suffering; but the emphasis is far more on the persecuting than on the protecting attributes. The distortion is most striking in the case of a mother's spirit. All ancestor spirits are apt to reveal themselves more often by the misfortune they inflict than by the benefits they bring. They emerge as sanctions of conduct more by reason of the punishments they bring down on wrongdoers than because of the benefits they confer for right doing. But the spirits of female ancestors are believed to be specially hard, cruel, and capricious. This is remarkable when we consider the love and devotion a mother shows for her child throughout his life. As we have observed elsewhere,[1] there is a never-ending struggle between a man and his ancestors. It is psychologically rooted in the relations of parents and children during the lifetime of the parents. Sacrifices and prayers are reminiscent of the principle of reciprocity in the real relations of parents and children. They contain the same elements of acquiescence, justice, and hidden coercion. They show another aspect, though, in the propitiation, reverence, and gratitude they often express.[2]

We can see why filial piety towards the dead parents is more strongly stressed than towards the living. While he is alive a person's father has direct jural and ritual authority over him; when he dies, the father becomes the paramount sanction of moral conduct for him; and this applies, *mutatis mutandis*, in only a lesser degree to the mother. The oath 'by my father and his goatskin (or sheepskin) and his three cowries' discussed in our previous book[3] is one proof of this. The centre of gravity of the whole social system of the Tallensi is the relationship of father and son, and it is the idea of filial piety that keeps this relationship in balance in the face of all the forces that tend to divide father and son. In this as in other respects the Tallensi are typical of patrilineal and patriarchal societies of simple culture from many parts of the globe, both ancient and modern.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 145.

[2] As death, among the Tallensi, is always believed to be mystically caused by a particular ancestor spirit or a group of ancestor spirits (material causes such as sickness being recognized as necessary but not sufficient without the mystical adjunct), it follows that a dead father or mother can kill (*ku*) his or her own child. The converse is impossible, since children, in life, have no jurisdiction over parents. I have asked Tallensi if patricide ever occurs or is known to have occurred. My most trusted informants said they had never heard of a case and thought the very idea abhorrent beyond measure. The idea of matricide they considered even more vile and unnatural.

[3] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 66.

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to his mother's brother's house and Ba'andoog gave him a cow of somewhat greater value than the white bull to give to his father-in-law. But such exchanges are exceptional. A fowl, a sixpence, a slab of tobacco, a few kola nuts, these are the more usual kinds of gifts that pass between extra-clan kin. 604 431

There are two gifts from a mother's brother to which great significance is attached. One of these is the gift of a hen to a lad from his *ahɔb* when he becomes capable of productive labour. This is almost a universal custom among the Tallensi. As we have shown in an earlier chapter, its importance lies in that it marks the beginning of the economic (and, therefore, in due course, social) self-differentiation of a boy within the joint family. It symbolizes, and in many cases actually serves as, the starting-point of the accumulation of wealth by individual effort. It was the proud boast of Barimoda that starting as a small boy with a fowl given to him by his father's *ahɔb* he had eventually 'achieved' (*paa*) a cow from which he had had several calves. In every settlement one can find two or three men who have matched this achievement, but it is more common to find men who have 'achieved' a goat or a sheep in this way. And though Tallensi always speak as if they began with one hen this is not strictly true. A boy may receive fowls from two or three matrilateral kinsmen, and he may be given more than one fowl by an *ahɔb* who is specially attached to him. Koyatee was unlucky with the first hen his true mother's brother gave him. When it died he told his *ahɔb*, who gave him another. He successfully bred a brood of chickens from this hen and was given yet another hen by the same mother's brother. 604 431 556

An *ahɔb* has no claims on livestock bred in this way by his sister's son. Very often, if a man needs a fowl for a sacrifice and has none that is suitable, he will send to ask his sister's son for one; but this is not connected with the gift of a hen he may have made to the latter many years before. The equivalent return for the mother's brother's hen is made in another way. As has been previously mentioned, when a man 'achieves' a cow, after starting with his mother's brother's hen, he owes this cow to his mother's brother's lineage ancestor shrine (*bɔyar*). He keeps the cow until it is too old to calve and then takes it to his mother's brother's lineage as a thank-offering to his maternal ancestors. For, say the natives, it must surely have been their beneficence that gave him prosperity, since the hen came from their son. 604 431 769

Far more important is the gift of land by an *ahɔb* to an *ahɔŋ*. There are degrees of finality about such a gift. It is a very common practice for both men and women to beg a plot of land from an *ahɔb*—or any other extra-clan matrilateral kinsman—living in an adjacent settlement to plant with ground-nuts or sweet potatoes. The land given for these purposes generally lies on the outskirts of the donor's settlement, near that of the recipient. As often as not, it is land too exhausted for grain crops; or else it is land not required by the *ahɔb* that season. Use of the land 604 426

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The Ritual Relations of Matrilateral and Sororal Kin

We have previously observed that the distinguishing attribute of an *ahəb* in Tale thought is that he sacrifices on behalf of his *ahəŋ*; and *ahəŋ* in this context includes all sororal kin, both those who are strictly *ahəs* and those who are strictly *yaas*. This is an indication of the importance attached to the ritual relations of extra-clan kin.

As with all the social relations of mother's brother and sister's son, their ritual relations vary in frequency and degree according to their genealogical distance. Thus a male *ahəŋ* is obliged to send a ready cooked fowl to be 'set out (*zien*)' in commemoration of his *ahəb* when the latter's funeral is being celebrated. A child of 3 or 4 will have the fowl sent in his name by his parents; a man of substance might, as a special gesture of affection and respect, send a sheep instead of a fowl. No *ahəŋ* would fail in this duty where his true mother's brother is concerned. I have known men who were small children when a mother's brother died, and whose parents omitted to send fowls to the funeral in their name, make up for it years later on the occasion of a funeral in the family of their *ahəb*. Not infrequently, men will voluntarily send a fowl or a sheep as a tribute to the funeral of a father's mother's brother. But it is exceptional for such a tribute to be offered at the funeral of a more remote 'mother's brother'.

When a man sacrifices to an ancestor spirit, any descendant of that ancestor has the right to be present and to share in the sacrament. The only exceptions are the cult of the clan or maximal lineage *bɔŋar* and, among the real Talis, the cult of the Earth and of the External *Bɔŋar*. It would be incompatible with the functions of these cults as foci of social integration on the highest level of corporate structure to allow non-members of the lineage concerned to take part in them. But an *ahəŋ* may attend domestic sacrifices to any of his matrilateral ancestors and sacrifices to the founding ancestor's shrine (*bɔŋar*) of the lineage of his true or classificatory mother's brother.

If a man proposes to make a sacrifice to one of his immediate antecedents (say, his father or grandfather), and if he is going to sacrifice anything larger than a fowl or guinea-fowl (say, a goat or a sheep or a cow), he is in duty bound to inform his sisters. He is not bound to tell his deceased sister's sons, but he generally does so, particularly if it is so important a sacrifice as a cow. A cow is seldom sacrificed to a shrine of lesser standing than a lineage *bɔŋar*. Hence when such a sacrifice is planned, the man who is making it should, in theory, inform all the sororal descendants of the lineage. He does not actually do so; he informs his own sisters' sons and his father's sisters' sons and leaves it to the other members of the lineage (who will, of course, automatically be present) to inform their close *ahəs* if they wish to. But news of such a sacrifice travels fast owing to the complex interweaving of kinship ties,

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and few people who have an interest in it escape hearing of it in advance. It is the same with funerals. Close extra-clan kin of the dead are informed, distant extra-clan kin, unless there is some special reason for sending them a message, find out indirectly.

An *ahəŋ* is not obliged to attend a sacrifice at his mother's brother's house (*ahəb yiri*); but if it is an important sacrifice, or if it is being made by his own mother's brother, he generally makes an effort to be present. Again, an *ahəŋ* whose home is near to that of his *ahəb* will be more likely to come than one who lives farther away. Thus, as has been recorded, Barimoda seldom missed a sacrifice at his true mother's brother's homestead which was very close to his own. Yinworəb, on the other hand, did not attend a single sacrifice at his mother's brother's house at Yinduuri during the year he was with me. It must not be thought, though, that a sacrifice at one's *ahəb yiri* is considered to be of no consequence. Tallensi say they would always go if they could, for their matrilateral ancestors have powers of blessing only little less than their agnatic ancestors; but it is not compulsory when the sister's son is not himself bringing the sacrifice. As every man has shrines consecrated to those of his matrilateral ancestors who have revealed themselves as directly concerned with his life, in his own home, he generally attends sacrifices at their lineage home only on special occasions or when they command him to offer sacrifice there.[1]

Thus when a man performs a private sacrifice in his own home a close sister's son or two may be present; it would be most unusual to find an *ahəŋ* more distant than a father's sister's son present. But in the majority of such private sacrifices, judging from the several score I have witnessed, sisters' sons are not in attendance. When, however, a cow is sacrificed to a lineage *bəyar*, there are always *ahəs* present; perhaps only one, perhaps half a dozen, including both near and distant sisters' sons.

As we have mentioned before, the right of a sister's son to be present at ritual ceremonies at his mother's brother's house is recognized by the allocation to him of a prescribed share of the sacrificial meat. He receives the neck of every animal sacrificed. One of the lighter moments at the end of a major sacrifice is the good-humoured wrangling of a group of

[1] We are here touching on one of the most complex features of Tale religious custom. The shrines consecrated to a man's matrilateral ancestors in his own homestead provide him with an indirect route to them. When he sacrifices to them on these shrines, he is, as it were, approaching them through an intermediary spirit or group of spirits. He is never able to approach them directly. Only their agnatic descendants can do that. Generally a matrilateral ancestor spirit (male or female) who has a shrine consecrated to him or her by a daughter's son or descendant demands sacrifices on that shrine. But there are many occasions on which the spirit demands that the sacrifice be offered to him or her directly on the shrine consecrated to him or her at a son's or agnatic descendant's house. It is on such occasions that the 'sister's son' or 'grandson' has to take the animal he has been commanded to offer to the homestead of his 'mother's brother' or 'grandfather'. See below, p. 324.

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funerals, comes because of the social importance of the occasion. The funeral of a section or maximal lineage head is of exceptional public interest. It marks the end of a phase of lineage history and the beginning of a new phase, involving realinements in the social relations of many people and probably of all segments of the clan. That is why every branch of the dead man's clan, representatives of related clans, and many matrilateral and sororal kinsmen come to take part in the funeral.

For similar reasons the ceremony by which the *bɔyar* of a lineage of a high order, such as a medial lineage or a maximal lineage, is formally taken over—'inherited (*vaa*)', as the natives put it—by a new lineage head is also attended by many 'sisters' sons' and 'grandsons' of the lineage and the clan. This ceremony marks the re-establishment of the structural equilibrium of the lineage around a new lineage head after its temporary disturbance by the death of the previous lineage head. It is an event of special importance for reaffirming the bonds of lineage solidarity and of kinship amity—for renewing, in the presence of their founding ancestors, the covenants of clanship and of kinship. All the males of the lineage, including the small boys, and representatives of all the other segments of the clan attend; and extra-clan kinsfolk from far and wide are present. I have counted as many as thirty, ranging from the full sister's son of the new lineage head to a distant 'sister's son', whose matrilateral ties with the clan went back to the founding ancestor of his maximal lineage, at such a gathering. Though it is a festive occasion, the attraction of food and drink is unquestionably of minor significance. Only two or three sheep, at most, are sacrificed, in addition to a large number of fowls; but every adult who attends is expected to bring a fowl to be offered to the *bɔyar* on his behalf. 'Sisters' sons' and 'grandsons' take special pride in offering their fowls, for this is the essence of the sacrament. An atmosphere of great goodwill and fellowship prevails, suffusing the most solemn moments of the sacrifice itself.

It is very much the same with the installation ceremonies of a newly appointed tendaana or other holder of a politico-ritual office. Extra-clan kin, clansmen, representatives of linked clans and of ritually associated clans, all come in great numbers to the ceremonies, bringing fowls, dishes of cooked food, baskets of grain and of ground-nuts, and other voluntary gifts to congratulate the new chief or tendaana and to testify to their kinship bonds with him and his clan. These ceremonies are, in effect, simply an elaboration of the ceremony of 'inheriting' a lineage *bɔyar*. Their significance is the same, but in a heightened degree, corresponding with the wider social sphere to which they refer. 'Sisters' sons' and 'grandsons' closely related to the new chief or tendaana are as proud of his elevation in status as are his close agnates.

This is one aspect of a man's ritual relations with his 'sisters' sons'

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and 'grandsons'. There is another, and in some ways more important, aspect. Every man sacrifices to both his agnatic ancestors and his maternal ancestors, as we have seen. He has shrines consecrated to ancestors of both lines in his homestead. The ancestors who constitute his *Yin* are very often matrilateral or include matrilateral ancestors. Indeed this is so common that a *Yin* that has no matrilateral ancestors is somewhat unusual. Knowing the significance of the *Yin* shrine as a symbol of a man's individuality, we can see why his connexion with his mother's side is apt to be stressed in it. Again, every man erects a shrine to his mother when she dies, which in the course of time may develop into a very important shrine for him. There are other shrines, too, which are consecrated to matrilateral ancestors. The most important of these are divining shrines (*bakologo*) and *bɔɣar* shrines.

A *bakologo* shrine is, by definition, a 'female (*bumpɔk*)' shrine. That is to say, the ancestors associated with it come, by definition, from a matrilateral lineage of the diviner; and the dominant figure among them is usually a woman, a 'mother'. It is a point of striking significance in the social psychology of the Tallensi that the spirits through whom a diviner makes contact with the ancestors of his clients should constitute a 'feminine' group,[1] the more so when the character of the *bakologo* complex is understood. The *bakologo*[2] is the very incarnation of the vindictive and jealous aspect of the ancestors. It persecutes the man in whose life it has intervened relentlessly, until he finally submits and 'accepts (*die*)' it—that is, until he undertakes to set up a shrine to the *bakologo* spirits in his own home so that he can sacrifice to them regularly. He then promises, also, to use the shrine for divining. But not every man has a talent for divining, so most men simply have the shrine and do not use it for divination. It is interesting to note that nine out of ten men over 40 have *bakologo* shrines. Every man, and not only those who have suffered exceptional misfortunes, is directed by the religious system of the Tallensi to project his deeper feelings of guilt and insecurity largely on to the mother image embodied in the *bakologo* complex. Usually, also, a man does not immediately yield to the demands of the *bakologo* ancestors. He temporizes, evades, and resists, perhaps for years, until he is at last forced to submit and accept the *bakologo*. This 'cools (*maa*)' or subdues the *bakologo*. By giving the spirits a home in his own house, where they can be cared for, their victim transforms their hate into love. They may still inflict misfortunes on him, but he has a means of placating them since he can sacrifice to the shrine. In return for the sacrifices they

[1] Cf. what was said on p. 235 above about the cruelty attributed to female ancestor spirits.

[2] As with all religious terms of this class among the Tallensi, *bakologo* is used both for the shrine (*baɣɔr*)—the tall, conical object built of mud and smeared with the dried blood and feathers of sacrifices—and for the group of ancestors to whom the shrine is dedicated. It signifies also the whole configuration of ideas and beliefs associated with the shrine.

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will henceforth bring blessings upon him, too, from time to time. And if he becomes a diviner the erstwhile persecutrix becomes his benefactress. The *bakologo* becomes a source of income instead of a standing menace.

As has been mentioned before, a divining shrine is set up for the man it has 'reached (*paa*)' by his matrilateral lineage from which the dominant ancestress of the complex came. For example, Pal-Zɔŋ's *bakologo* ancestors consisted of his father, paternal grandfather and great-grandfather, and the latter's mother, who was the dominant figure of the group. She had been a daughter of the Gbambee Tɛndaana's maximal lineage. Zɔŋ, therefore, had to go to the present head of this maximal lineage to arrange for the setting up of his *bakologo* shrine. Taking a fowl, a guinea-fowl, a basket of grain, and a pot of beer, Zɔŋ went to the Gbambee Tɛndaana to lay his request before him. The tɛndaana sacrificed the two birds to his lineage shrine (*bɔɣar*) on Zɔŋ's behalf, explaining in his invocation to his ancestors the occasion that had brought their *ahɔŋ* to plead with them. He ended with the customary exhortation to the ancestors that they should bless the setting up of the new *bakologo* shrine, assist Zɔŋ to become a successful diviner, and grant him prosperity, children, and health. He finally 'scooped' (*fiŋ*) the lineage *bɔɣar* for Zɔŋ. That is to say, he put a little of the sediment accumulated at the bottom of the pot, which is the most important part of the paraphernalia of a *bɔɣar*, into a tiny pot for Zɔŋ to take home to add to his new *bakologo* shrine. In this way the direct continuity of the new *bakologo* shrine with the matrilateral lineage *bɔɣar* is tangibly symbolized.

Next evening a party from Gbambee arrived at Zɔŋ's homestead to perform the ceremony of actually setting up the new shrine. The party consisted of the Gbambee Tɛndaana's own son, representing his father, and several other members of his maximal lineage; for though the immediate responsibility for the ceremony falls on the head of the lineage, the whole lineage is concerned in this ritual service to their *ahɔŋ*. At Zɔŋ's house they found a number of members of his inner lineage and clan as well as three *ahɔs* of Zɔŋ's inner lineage. The ceremony lasted all night. The details are not relevant here, and it need only be said that it consists of a series of ritual episodes with interludes of conviviality and hilarity. It is one of the paradoxes of the *bakologo* complex that the setting up of a divining shrine is one of the least solemn of Tale ceremonies.

The ancestors associated with Zɔŋ's *bakologo* comprised a fairly simple combination. Naabdiya's *bakologo* ancestors consisted of his mother's father, *his* mother, and *her* mother. It was the clansmen of the last who came to set up the shrine for their 'grandson' (*yaaŋ*) Naabdiya. To reach them Naabdiya had first to go to his mother's brother's people; they escorted him to his maternal grandfather's mother's brother's

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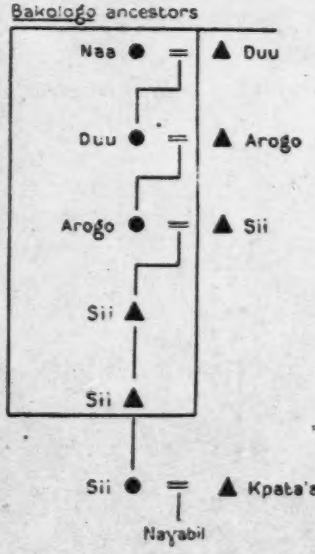
lineage, and thence he was escorted to his maternal grandfather's mother's mother's brother's lineage. At each place he had to sacrifice a fowl and a guinea-fowl to the lineage *bɔyar*. Nayabil's *bakologo* ancestors were his mother's father, *his* father, *his* mother, *her* mother, and *her* mother. Zɔŋ knew of the ancestress who was the dominant figure in his *bakologo*. He had been to Gbambee to attend sacrifices to the lineage *bɔyar* as an *ahɔŋ*, both as a child, accompanying his father, and as an adult by himself. Naabdiya and Nayabil had never heard of the ancestresses who dominated their *bakologo* shrines before they revealed themselves as *bakologo* ancestresses. They had never before been to the natal clan settlements of these women; and once their divining shrines were established would probably never go there again.

One reason for this difference is spatial proximity. Zɔŋ lives about three miles from the Gbambee Tɛndaana; the matrilateral kinsmen who set up Naabdiya's shrine live about twelve miles from him, and those who set up Nayabil's shrine nearly fifteen miles from his clan settlement. But more important is the genealogical distance involved. Zɔŋ is considered to be a fairly close *ahɔŋ* of the Gbambee Tɛndaana, Naabdiya and Nayabil count themselves distant 'grandsons' (*yaas*) of the matrilateral kinsmen who thus almost accidentally became socially relevant for them.[1]

Though matrilateral ancestors are particularly conspicuous in connexion with the *bakologo* complex, they can be associated with many types of ancestor shrines. Hence few men pass through life without having at least one such experience as that of Naabdiya and Nayabil. Tiezien, for instance, had a magnificent baobab tree outside the entrance to his homestead. It was a stalwart sapling when Tiezien was born and



[1] Nayabil is a Kpata'ar man, and the matrilateral kinsmen who came to set up his *bakologo* were not Tallensi but Mamprusi from beyond the White Volta. This is an interesting illustration of how extra-clan kinship in this part of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast cuts across 'tribal' and political boundaries. As the attached genealogy, showing Nayabil's genealogical connexion with his *bakologo* ancestors and ancestresses, indicates, it is also a beautiful illustration of how matrilateral kinship 'travels' (*kyɛŋ*) through intermarriage between adjacent clans. The result is that genealogical distance by matrilateral ties is closely correlated with socio-geographical distance, as in this instance.

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602 could not have been less than 80 years old. This tree was the centre of
769 the communal life of the neighbourhood. It was, as every native would
778 automatically expect, also an important ancestor shrine. A few years after it sprouted Tiezien's paternal grandfather discovered through a diviner that his mother's father and *his* mother, a Pusunamoo woman, had chosen the baobab as their shrine. The Pusunamoo woman's maximal lineage consecrated it for Tiezien's grandfather. Thereafter sacrifices were regularly offered on the tree. In due course Tiezien succeeded to
[164] the custody of this shrine. Then came the influenza epidemic of 1918. Many people died at Kpata'ar, including members of Tiezien's inner lineage and wives and children of the lineage. A diviner revealed that these deaths were being inflicted by the Pusunamoo ancestress in retaliation for long neglect. She demanded that Tiezien should collect a large number of fowls from all the members of his inner lineage and take them to Pusunamoo to be sacrificed to the lineage *bɔyar* of her medial lineage as an atonement. This was Tiezien's first and last contact with his matrilateral kin at Pusunamoo up to 1936.

602 It is evident, from these examples, as has been previously suggested, that the majority of a man's remote matrilateral kin are not socially relevant for him. All, however, are potentially so and may become so at some time or another; and when they do enter his field of social relations it is chiefly in their ritual capacity.

602 We said that the most important ancestor shrines linking a man to a
778 matrilateral lineage are *bakologo* and *bɔyar* shrines. Of the two the *bɔyar*
769 shrine is, in fact, the more important. As we have shown in our earlier book,[1] the ancestor cult of the Tallensi culminates in the conception and cult of the *bɔyar*. This notion and the cult that expresses it form the centre of gravity of the lineage system. Hence it seems strange, at first sight, to find that every *bɔyar* must necessarily be derived from a matrilateral lineage. We can understand this, however, if we consider the significance of the *bɔyar* in the lineage system.

602 A *bɔyar* is the shrine consecrated to the founding ancestor of a lineage
778 and his mother. It symbolizes the identity of that lineage and its dif-
769 ferentiation from other lineages of the same order within a more inclusive lineage or within a clan. A lineage expands by a process of internal
613 segmentation and differentiation that follows the lines of cleavage inherent in the structure of the joint family.[2] The component segments of a lineage are differentiated from one another primarily by reference to their descent from different 'mothers'—that is different wives of their common founding ancestor. But a woman does not sever her ties with her lineage when she marries and becomes a mother; and in kinship questions Tale thought is dominated by the lineage concept. Hence Tallensi think of a lineage progenitrix not only as such-and-such a

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 137.
[2] Ibid. ch. xii.

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named person but also, and chiefly, as a member of such-and-such a clan and lineage. When Tallensi discuss the internal structure of a maximal lineage what they emphasize is the clan and lineage origin of the several 'mothers' of its segments.

When a new segment begins to crystallize out in any lineage, it requires a *bɔŋar* of its own to symbolize its identity. And since its genealogical distinctness comes from its progenitrix, its *bɔŋar* must come from her lineage. This is simply a consequence of the fact that the notion of the *bɔŋar* is a ritual conceptualization and sanction of the singularity, as well as of the unity and the continuity of the lineage. A new lineage segment can only arise, among the Tallensi, by derivation from an existing lineage. It is, one might say, a rearrangement within the existing social system, and does not represent a breach of continuity. The *bɔŋar* symbolizing it is, similarly, an offshoot and replica of an existing *bɔŋar*. To put this in another way, a person's status (i.e. the sum total of his rights and duties in relation to Tale society at large and to all the other members of the society) is at bottom determined by his or her descent, as we have previously shown. When he becomes an ancestor spirit his mystical attributes and powers are not absolutely autonomous arising solely from the fact that he begot sons and then died. Whatever their real psychological roots may be, in Tale religious thought these attributes and powers belong to an ancestor spirit because when he died he 'went to join his forefathers (*kyeŋ paag u banam*)' and because he represents his whole line of ancestors in a particular situation or context. Hence every ancestor shrine either is or in course of time becomes the altar for a group of lineally related ancestors and ancestresses, never for one ancestor alone. A shrine consecrated to a particular ancestor is *ipso facto* consecrated to his agnatic descendants that come between him and the owner of the shrine. Sacrifice is offered and prayer addressed to the whole sequence of ancestors, in order of ascent; for the more remote ancestor can only be approached through the less remote. This principle is well illustrated in the examples of *bakologo* complexes quoted earlier. It applies to both patrilineal and matrilateral ancestors. Even when a man sacrifices to his own father's or mother's spirit he invokes them to 'attend with all their forefathers (*ba dɔl ni ba banam waabi*)'. Conversely, when an ancestor intervenes in his descendant's life he can only do so through the medium of those who came between him and his descendant.

It would take us too far afield to discuss all the evidence of the significance of this principle in Tale religion. One more item must suffice. According to Tale thought, an unnatural death is one that is shown by divination *not* to have been mystically caused by the ancestors. The physical cause of the death makes no difference to the issue. A person may die of old age; if none of his ancestors claim to have caused his death, this is a sign that he was not 'human (*ninvoo*)'—that is a full social being. He was a disguised bush-sprite. He is not given human burial,

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he does not join his forefathers, he does not become an ancestor spirit. This shows that it is not the fact of death that turns a person into an ancestor spirit but the fact that, as Tallensi believe, he is summoned (*buol*) by his ancestors and goes to join them.

Thus when a lineage progenitrix becomes an ancestor spirit, she does so as the bearer of mystical powers and attributes that reside in the collective body of her lineage ancestors, symbolized and made accessible to man in their lineage *bɔyar*. Looked at in this way, too, the *bɔyar* consecrated to her and her son must be an offshoot of her lineage *bɔyar*.[1]

In addition, there is the obvious point that a segment of a lineage cannot symbolize its distinctness by means of a *bɔyar* derived from their own lineage *bɔyar*, which is the symbol of the genealogical and social unity of the lineage, not of its internal differentiation. The lineage *bɔyar*, as is evident, is the most esoteric symbol of the principle that runs right through Tale social structure, that social differentiation within the lineage framework springs from maternal origin. This principle operates in lineage structure;[2] and we have seen how, at the other end of the scale, it constitutes the springboard of individual differentiation in the structure of the joint family.[3] This is a further instance of the consistency of Tale social structure at all levels conferred upon it by the kinship system.

A new segment of a lineage begins to crystallize out as a recognized corporate unit in the time of its founding ancestor's grandsons. For it is not until then that the process of fission in the lineage has gone far enough to separate his grandchildren and his brothers' grandchildren into distinct nuclear lineages. Thus it is a man's grandson or great-grandson who sets up a *bɔyar* consecrated to him and his mother. According to the idiom of Tale religious thought, the ancestor demands that a *bɔyar* be set up for him and his mother. A day is appointed for the ceremony, and all the descendants of the progenitrix, through both males and females, are informed. In the morning or early afternoon the head of the new segment takes a fowl, a goat or sheep, and a pot of beer to the head of his grandmother's inner lineage, or in some clans, medial lineage. The men of that lineage assemble so that all of its branches are represented and the animals are sacrificed to the lineage *bɔyar* on behalf of the *ahɔŋ*. Then the *bɔyar* is 'scooped' for him, in the same way as was described in the case of the diviner's shrine. The *ahɔŋ* goes straight

[1] In theory, obviously, the only lineage *bɔyar* that need not be derived from another *bɔyar* is the *bɔyar* of a maximal lineage. Actually most maximal lineage *bɔya* conform to the pattern we have described. The only truly sovereign *bɔya*—i.e. *bɔya* not derived from other *bɔya*—are the External *Bɔya* of the Talis and their congeners. And it is significant that the component maximal lineages of these clans generally have two *bɔya*, one the domestic representative of the External *Bɔyar*, the other a distinctive *bɔyar* derived from their founder's mother's lineage. Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. vii.

[2] Ibid., ch. xii.

[3] *Supra*, Ch. III.

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based upon a profound antagonism. Second, the rites evidently recreate and regenerate the religious, the magical, and the traditional bulwarks of the social life of the Namoos.

A week later the scene shifts to the Hill Tallis. On the first day of the following moon, Bɔɣaraam ŋmarig, the Tallis begin their harvest festival of the same name. Despite the difference of name, it is the Daa festival translated into the peculiar and esoteric ritual idiom of the Hill Tallis. Namoos and Tallis, as the exclusion of the former from the inner mysteries at Baari indicated, constitute two religious sects. The cult of the bɔɣar, after which the Hill Tallis name their festival, dominates the religion of all the Tallis, but is known to the Namoos only by hearsay. Its hypertrophied development among the Hill Tallis is indeed completely hidden from their own sect-brethren at Baari and Gbizug. A bɔɣar may be a grove of trees, a cave in the hillside, or a small natural enclosure made by trees and boulders. It is truly sacred, for it may be entered only for ritual purposes, and in the company of all the ritual officiants. A bɔɣar's communicants generally comprise a group of linked lineages or of several clans, each of which appoints one officiant. All the ritual of the bɔɣar cult is built up on the notion of sacrifice, and every officiant or his representative must be present at every sacrifice. It is an axiom that a quarrel or dispute between communicants must be healed at once, by rites of reconciliation at the bɔɣar. The bɔɣar is the pinnacle of their ancestor cult, for it is there that all the ancestors of the communicants reside. It has tremendous magical power, amoral, like all Tale magic, and therefore applicable both for beneficient and maleficent ends. Thus its potency as fertility magic is widely renowned, and it can be invoked to bring death and destruction upon an enemy, by its communicants.

This, and much more, I learnt with very great difficulty, only after I had been initiated. For many months my enquires were fruitless. The Namoos know the dates of Bɔɣaraam, and the dances. Of the rituals they had, despite centuries of intimate contact, absolutely no knowledge. Indeed they refuse to hear of it, for they regard the cults of the Tallis with fear and aversion. The Tallis, on the other hand, never ceased to warn me against betraying what I had seen to my Namoos friends. It is, for them, the sin against the Holy Ghost punishable by instantaneous death, inflicted by the bɔɣar. This, the most absolute cleavage between the Namoos and the Hill Tallis, depends upon the fact that the latter initiate their sons into their cult. Nothing corresponding to initiation exists among the Namoos or even Gbizug or Baari. The Bɔɣaraam ritual is at the same time communion, initiation, and offering of first fruits.

The various bɔɣar congregations commence the ritual of Bɔɣaraam on